Umesh Mishra

The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.
Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

MAKERS OF INDIAN LITERATURE

UMESH MISHRA

by
GOVINDA JHA

TRANSLATED FROM THE MAITHILI ORIGINAL BY
JAYAKANTA MISHRA



SAHITYA AKADEMI

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Rabindra Bhavan, 35 Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi 110 001

Sales : 'Swati', Mandir Marg, New Delhi 110001

Jeevan Tara Building, 4th Floor, 23A/44X, Diamond Harbour Road, Taratala, Calcutta 700 053

ADA Rangamandira, 109, J. C Road, Bangalore 560 002

172, Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Marg, Dadar, Bombay 400 014

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Preface

While writing this monograph, I have often had to rely upon facts obtained from others. For this reason it is quite possible that I might have made mistakes. In a work like this it is not practicable to authenticate the source of every little bit of information. Hence, if some errors have crept into it, instead of holding some one else responsible for them, I own full responsibility for them.

I had the privilege of knowing Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Umesh Mishra personally for a short while — when he was Director of the Mithila Sanskrit Institute at Darbanga and my father, Mahavaiyakarana Dinabanhu Jha, worked there as a traditional pandit. I have made use of whatever I happened to know directly as a result of this acquaintance while writing this monograph. I am a son of a Sankritist, and have studied Sanskrit grammar on traditional lines. I have always been specially interested in oriental studies. Naturally I hold Mahamahopadhyaya Mishra in high esteem. If on account of this excessive regard I have been guilty of exaggerating his merits and thereby offended some scholars, I humbly submit that none need take my remarks as casting aspersions on anybody else's abilities.

In the kind of regulated and even tenor of life led by Dr Mishra, there is hardly any scope for exciting or sensational events. Still, those who have a love for or are at all interested in the world of Maithili or Sanskrit learning will find, I hope, even this factual account of the growth and development of a scholar fascinating.

I am extremely grateful to Dr Jayakanta Mishra, retired Professor of the University of Allahabad, for having made available to me a large number of relevant papers and information which made my task easier.

Govinda Jha

Contents

I

The Land and the Times

Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Umesh Mishra was born in the land of Mithila. Situated in the north-east corner of the State of Bihar, it is bounded like a fortress by the low lying plains of Nepal on the north, by the river Sadanira (the modern Gandak) on the west, the Ganges on the south and the Kosi on the east. Irrigated by a network of rivers and rivulets, without hills or mountains, Mithila is a richly green and lush land. Its peculiar geographical situation has made it impregnable since pre-historic times. Thousands of years ago, Mathava Videgha in a bid to spread the advent of the Aryans across the breadth of India, reached the banks of Sadanira. Along with a group of his co-travellers who were enlightened seers, he crossed the river Sadanira and settled down in the land of Mithila. This proved to be a major event in pre-historic India. The white fire of enlightenment that was then kindled on this land has been kept alive to this day Of course, during its long history of several thousands of years on Indian soil, it has suffered a variety of tempests and political and ideological revolutions which have left their inevitable mark. However, the impact of these external upheavals was less in Mithila than in other parts of the country. Yet slowly and imperceptibly, changes did take place. The Mithila of Vedas began to absorb various local religions, myths, languages and cultures, and consequently by the time of Asoka it became the Mithila of the Puranas and Smritis, and its social fabric became an amalgamation of profession-based castes and tribes This social format continued unchanged for centuries and a glimpse of it was visible till the end of the last century.

In the history of India just as Magadha, lying to the south of the Ganges, achieved glorious heights in the field of

politics, so Mithila, lying to the north of the Ganges, excelled in the field of scholarship. Even as early as the Vedic times, there were two distinct lines of development—Vedic religion and speculations of the Upanishads which in later years came to be known as the Path of Rituals (religion or *Karma Kanda*) and the Path of Knowledge (philosophy or *jnana kanda*) respectively. Mm. Mishra spent his entire life in the pursuit of both these paths and achieved his life's mission by reaching a finale to his efforts in this regard. Religion was the goal of his sacrifices and philosophy, the means. This was the tradition he had inherited from his land and this was the ideal of his times. For him, a life of worldly pleasures, lighthearted entertainment or exploitation were taboos. He believed it to be essential to guard oneself against such weaknesses.

And yet man has weaker moments. He cannot completely subdue human sentiments; he may succeed in reducing them, but cannot abandon them altogether. Naturally, though religion and philosophy dominated his life yet now and then the emotions and soft things of life also held out an appeal for him. Accordingly Mm. Mishra was moderately inclined to devote his time and attention to creative endeavour and enjoyment of light literature. And whatever he contributed in this vein was also significant and in itself so important that it entitles him to be considered as a Maker of Indian Literature !

Mm. Mishra was born in 1895. Till this date Mithila, unlike other parts of India, was bogged down in the mire of decadence and degeneration on account of bigoted orthodoxy and was inevitably opposed to outside influences, however superior and fresh, as being tainted and unacceptable. Long before the establishment of British supremacy the country had for years been under the rule of Muslim rulers who used Persian as their language. Only those who knew Persian, could hope to reach the topmost position and places of honour. But in Mithila, especially among the Maithil Brahmins who were regarded as the sole custodians of learning, the slogan was: *na vadet yavani bhasa pranaih kanthagatairapie.* "One should not leave one's language and adopt the language of the Yavans even when one's life is in danger".

When they had such abhorrence for the Persian language, it can be imagined how great their objection was to the English language. English had come to their notice only recently Therefore, scholars proficient in Persian or English were few and far between. Education generally meant proficiency in the study of the traditional branches of Sanskrit learning of which the Vedas (scriptures), Dharmashastra (ethics), Mimamsa (rites and rituals), Nyaya (logic), Vyakarana (grammar) and Jyotish (astrology and astronomy) were the subjects usually perused. The custom was to offer any one of these subjects as the main branch of study. Any other subject that was outside it or new to Sanskritic lore was considered irrelevant or even forbidden

Some students would now and then surreptitiously contrive to learn Sanskrit poetry or indulge in reading or writing modern Indian poetry or folk songs. Those students who showed even a little interest in writing poetry were derided in elderly circles and were the butt of such strictures as "Well, he would not complete his studies", "He is no longer pursuing his studies seriously" or "He is lost in cheap and light pursuits". Thus, only those who could keep themselves away from light literary pursuits and devote themselves to serious studies and maintain strictly orthodox ways of living, were recognised in social parlance as pandits and the appellation 'pandit' was restricted to such persons only. They occupied a special place of honour in society. Whenever any point of dispute arose concerning religion,or social conduct, it was the pandit alone who could give a decisive ruling.

The approval or disapproval of the pandit had a powerful impact on society. For this reason he was the leader of society and his most important task was to impart knowledge. Whosever desired to pursue studies, could approach him and it was his duty, nay an obligatory mandate, to teach free of charge. The attention of meritorious students added to his prestige and his home became a school which in those days was called Chaupadi (or Chatushpati, a school in which the four vedas were read). The pandits had no regular income, nor did they care for it. Their family expenses were met by society in the form of occasional gifts. They were content with whatever they got and lived happily. This was supposed to be

the ideal situation and such ideal pandits were of course rare—perhaps one among thousands Literacy had consequently dwindled to such a low level that even Brahmins were rarely literate; the situation among other classes was worse. The Kayasthas were an exception; they used to make their people learn the three r's Whoever needed to get something written or read out took their help. The common man regarded cultivation of land as the sole occupation for his livelihood for which literacy was obviously not necessary. Only children of the rich or those of the upper castes learnt the three r's. The Kayasthas were largely employed to carry out this job on payment of some remuneration

There were two places for receiving education · one the Chaupadi of the pandit (who would make his own home a school) and the other the court of the landlord. Rich landlords used to employ pandits under their personal patronage. The pandits performed their religious rites and sacrifices, as well as taught their children. These landlords were the patrons of education, especially higher education. Big zamindars, who were as highly regarded as rajas, thought it was prestigious to adorn their courts with famous pandits.

But all Pandits did not get the opportunity of having such liberal patrons. Therefore they mostly lived either on their own meagre agricultural produce and ran a Chaupadi in their own homes or left their homeland in search of a patron in some far off place. Such were the conditions prevailing in the educational system during the early years of Mahamahopadhyaya Mishra.

II

A Life Sketch

Mahamahopadhya Dr Umesh Mishra was born on November 18, 1895 at village Binhi near Janakpur in Nepal. He belonged to the family of a Shandilya Gotriya Maithil Brahmin of Sodarpur–Raiyyam origin. His father, Mahamahopadhyaya Jayadeva Mishra, and mother Suga Devi, lived in village Gajahara, 13 km north of the Rajnagar railway station in district Madhubani of Bihar State (at present the nearest railway station Khutauna is 3 km from the village). His mother expired when he was barely seven years old. Since then his father himself had to nurse and educate the young boy. In those days his father used to live at Darbhanga under the patronage of Maharajadhiraj Kameshwarsingh Bahadur. Young Umesh was brought to Darbhanga but very soon had to go to Varanasi as his father was appointed a teacher there in the Darbhanga Sanskrit Pathashala. It was here that young Umesh received his early education.

At Varanasi, Umesh Mishra got the opportunity for excellent modern education along with traditional education which naturally, he got from his father. Young Umesh Mishra passed the high school examination from Bengali Tola High School in 1914. In this examination he won the Shiromani Gold Medal for securing the highest marks in Sanskrit. In 1916 he passed the Madhyama examination from Government Sanskrit College Later, in 1918, he passed the Intermediate Examination from Central Hindu College. The same year, at the age of 22, he was married to Kumudini Devi (nee Nunu Dai), daughter of Pandit Surendra Jha of village Mangra. He graduated in 1920 and passed his M.A. examination in Sanskrit (Philosophy group) from Benares Hindu University in 1922. In 1923 he successfully competed for the title Kavya-Tirtha at Calcutta.

In 1923 Mahamahopadhyaya Mishra was appointed lecturer in the Sanskrit Department at Allahabad University. Here he came in close contact with Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha, under whose guidance he was initiated into higher studies and research. Thus from 1923 to 1959 he devoted himself to extensive reading and writing books in English, Maithili, Hindi and Sanskrit, learned research papers, editing a number of difficult texts, and laying the foundations of or contributing to various Indological and literary organisations. Among them, several are noteworthy and exceptional. He presided over the Third Session of the All India Maithili Sahitya Parishad at Ghorshardiba and guided the deliberations of the Maithili Spelling Reform Committee at Muzaffarpur. The addresses delivered by him on both occasions are regarded as milestones in the history of Maithili studies. In 1943 on the auspicious occasion of the New Year he was adorned with the highest honour for a Sanskritist, namely the title of Mahamahopadhyaya. The same year the Government of Bihar appointed him a Member of the Bihar State Sanskrit Reorganisation Committee, and he was elected to preside over the Religion and Philosophy Section of the All India Oriental Conference (Varanasi Session). He not only founded a Research Institute in the memory of his mentor Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha called the Ganganatha Jha Research Institute but also accepted the responsibility of running it as Honorary Secretary. From here he brought out the *Oriental Research Journal*. In 1946 he was again asked to preside over the Philosophy and Religion section of the All India Oriental Conference (Nagpur Session) and in 1948 he organised the Darbhanga Session of the All India Oriental Conference as its Local Secretary with unprecedented success. The same year saw him preside over the Philosophy section of Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Meerut.

For 36 years (from 1923 to 1959) the Mahamahopadhyaya continued to serve at the University of Allahabad. For four years (from 1949 to 1952), however, he went on the request of Maharajadhiraj Sir Kameshwar Singh Bahadur of Dharbhanga to work as the Director of the Mithila Research Institute established by him and, having organised its

activities on a sound footing, returned to join his original post at Allahabad.

In 1961 when the above-mentioned Maharajadhiraj founded a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga out of his own generous donation Mm. Mishra was appointed its first Vice Chancellor and in this capacity he worked from January 1961 to February 1964.

On retirement from the Position of the Vice-Chancellor, he entered the fourth and last phase of his life. From now onwards his life turned from the pursuit of knowledge to that of religion. The same year he had a tank constructed in his native village. In 1966 in the same village he erected a Shiva temple in the memory of his parents. In 1967 he organised a huge religious congregation where all the 18 Puranas were recited and sacrifices performed with great devotion.

He had six sons. Under his personal care and supervision they received the best education and became accomplished scholars. After completing their education up to the Master's degree, they have settled in life as they deserved.

Having thus completed a successful career, the Mahamahopadhyaya passed off to his heavenly abode at the age of 73 years on September 9, 1967.

He has bequeathed to us as symbols of his glorious achievements six brilliant sons, 13 original books, about 30 critically edited texts, more than 50 research papers, more than a 100 disciples of various grades, several institutions, one tank and one temple. The following pages will discuss each aspect of his life in successive chapters.

III

Ancestors

In the traditional genealogical records maintained since the days of Maharaja Harasingha Deva (1275-1335) of the Brahmins and Kayasthas of Mithila known as Maithil Panji Mm. Mishra's ancestors have been traced up to the twenty-third generation. The family tree has been given as Appendx II at the end of this monograph. On looking into it one notices that his earliest known ancestor, Halayudha, originally lived in village Simhasam. In the seventeenth generation Mahamahopadhyaya Ratneshvar left village Simhasam and settled in village Sodarpour. Since then the family came to be known as belonging originally to Sodarpur. In the fourteenth generation the sons and nephews of Reghunth left Sodarpur and settled in different villages. Jora went to live at Digon, Jivanath at Raiyyam, Mm. Bhavanath and Mm. Devanath at Sarisav, Dalu at Kataka and Varah at Bhoul. Thus Sodarpur family came to reside in five villages and were respectively designated as belonging to Sodarpur-Digon, Sodarpur Raiyyam, Sodarpur-Sarisav and Sodarpur-Bhoul. It was thus that according to the traditional Maithili genealogical records Mm. Mishra's origin came to be known as Sodarpur Raiyyam.

In Mithila this family of Sodarpur is known as a veritable mine of scholars. This fact is proved by a reference to Maithil genelogical records (Panji) where along with the names of their original residence, each name is given an honorific title or epithet describing his scholarly status. These honorifics could be divided into four categories : (i) Mahamahopadhyaya, (ii) Mahopadhyaya, (iii) Sat (the noble one, such as Sadupadhyaya, Sanmishra, Satthukkura, etc.) and (iv) Vai (Vaiyakarana, i.e. grammarian, Nai (logician), etc.

No other family of Maithil Brahmins has perhaps greater number of Mahamahopadhyayas than this family. This progenitor of the Sodarpur family Ratneshvar himself was a Mahamahopadhyaya. His three sons Haleshvar, Sureshvar and Jivesvar were also Mahamahopadhyayas. Sureshvar, who belonged to the sixteenth generation has two sons : Sarbaya and Vishvanath, both of whom earned the title of Mahamahopadhyayas. Vishvanath had six sons, of whom three were Mahamahopadhyayas . Ravinath. Raghunath and Lakshminath. Ravinath's three sons Jivanath, Ayachi and Bhavanath were Mahamahopadhyayas. Ayachi Bhavanath's sons was Shankar, the well-known philosopher Mahamahopadhyaya Shankar Mishra.

In the Sodarpur Bhoual branch the grandson of Ramanath was Mahamahopadhyaya Harinath Upadhyaya. His son Jayadeva alias Pakshadhar 'Pakhe' was the illustrious author of Aloka, the commentary on Tattvachintamani, and also bore the title of Mahamahopadhyaya. The progenitor of the Kataka branch Dalu's great-grandson Keshav Mishra the well-known law-giver, was a Mahamahopadhyaya who won many laurels along with Mm. Bhavanath at the court of Manikyachandra, the ruler of Garhwal. In the sixth generation from Mm. Mishra was Harinandan who also had earned the title of Mahamahopadhyaya. In the fourth generation from Mm. Mishra was Kalikadatta, the Vaiyakarana (grammarian), and his son Jayadeva Mishra was awarded the title of Mahamahopadhyaya by the government of India. It would thus seem that Mn Umesh Mishra had the good fortune of being born in a distinguished family of Mahamahopadhyayas. In the lineage of Sanskrit teachers five luminaries of this family stand out.

1. Mm Shankar
2. Mm Pakshadhar Mishra
3 Mm. Keshav Mishra
4. Mm. Jayadev Mishra
5. Mm. Umesh Mishra

Mm. Mishra's father, Jayadeva Mishra, began his scholastic life in village Saurath near Madhubani town under Mm. Rajamatha Mishra (popularly known as Rajje Mishra) in the

latter's residential ch*aupadi*. Some time later Mm. Rajje Mishra moved to village Gandhawary nearly seven km. west of Pandaul Railway station to join the school run by Chandravati Bahuasini who was the wife of Babu Vasudeva Singh, a step-brother of the ten Maharaja of Darbhanga Ruddiasingha (1840—1850. Mm. Jayadeva Mishra too went there to continue his studies under his teacher. This Sanskrit Pathshala was functioning since the very inception of this court, where celebrities among Maithil scholars like Mm. Raj Mishra, Mm. Parmeshwar Jha, the eminent Pandit Khuddi Jha, Kavishwar Chanda Jha, etc. had assembled. Amidst such a galaxy of Pandits Mm. Jayadeva Mishra grew up to become an exceptionally learned scholar. Here it may be pointed that Mahamahopadhyaya Dr Sir Ganga Nath Jha was a (maternal) grandson of the above lady Chandravati so that it was but natural that he should often visit and stay there for days together. It was thus that Mm. Jayadeva Mishra came in contact with the boy Ganganath. This acquaintance developed into famioy intimacy and later flowered into the relationship of a teacher and pupil Thus were laid the foundations of some of those factors that determined the future course of Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra's life.

In 1899 Lady Chandravati died. The court of Gandhwari was disbanded. The estate was attached to Darbhanga Raj. But the pandits were not orphaned. The then Maharaja of Darbhanga Lakshmishwar Singh was a patron of learning and took care of all the pandits and students of that court and welcomed them at Darbhanga. Here under the Maharaja's patronage there were several other erudite Sanskrit scholars such as Mm Kanhai Jha, the great scholar of Nyayashastra, Babujan Jha, grammarian Halli Jha, scholar of Nyayashastra Vishwanatha Jha, Mm. Chitradhar Mishra, Mm. Shivakumar Mishra, Kedar Bhattachaya, etc. The genius and scholarship of Jayadeva Mishra flourished in the company of such illustrious men of learning.

Jayadeva Mishra even while attached to Gandhwari court, had the opportunity of studying at Varanasi higher grammar and the philosophy of under scholars like Tatva Shastri. There he taught Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha the texts of

M.A. Dr Ganganatha Jha has himself described this in the following words ·

I was fourtunate in securing the ungrudging help without any remuneration from the late Mahamahopadhyaya Pandit Jayadeva Mishra who had studied the shastras through the patronage of my grandmother at Gandhwari and through that relationship regarded himself as member of our family. This relationship he maintained throughout his life.[1]

In the same vein he goes on to express his obligations to him :

> With the ungrudging help of Jayadeva Mishra I succeeded in passing the (M.A.) examination with a second class.[2]

In 1902 his wife Suga Devi expired. It was a year later that he came to Varanasi with his eight-year old son Umesh and there joined Darbhanga Raj Pathshala as a teacher. From now onwards he spent the rest of his life in the pursuit of Sanskrit learning. He wrote three important books on Sanskrit grammar : *Shastrartharatnavali, Paribhashendu Shekhara-Tika-Vijaya* and *Vyutpattivada-Tika-Jaya.* These books have been reprinted several times, and are well-known all over India. He successfully refuted several scholars of repute in disputations (*Shastrarthas*) In 1922 he was appointed professor at Benaras Hindu University. The same year he was awarded the highest title of Mahamahopadhyaya by the Government. In his native village he had a tank constructed and performed a full-fledged sacrifice as enjoined in the scriptures with eclat. On that occasion eminent scholars like Mm Parameshvera Jha. Mm Dr Ganganath Jha and several others were invited.

He had three sons : the first was Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra whom this monograph seeks to discuss, the second Ramesh Mishra *alias* Misari Mishra; and the third Dr Shrikrishna Mishra who became head of the English Department in L.N. Mithila University at Darbhanga.

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1. *Autobiographical Notes of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha, p 30.*
2. *Ibid, p. 35.*

Two of his sons who were destined to become luminaries in the world of learning received the best possible education before he passed away from this world in 1926.

Of his successful life as a scholar, his dearest pupil Mm. Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha's tribute in the form of a Sanskrit verse deserves to be quoted ·

> *Jayah kule jayobhayase jayah panditamandale Jayo mrityau jayo mokse Jayadevah sada Jayah.*
>
> Glorious in ancestry, splendid in studiousness, successful in the assemblies of scholars, great in the hour of death, triumphant in achieving the Final Emancipation of the Soul, Jayadeva always won the day.

IV

Education

A young boy is usually taught the alphabet on completing five years of age. Accordingly Mm. Mishra must have had his first lesson in 1900. But it is not possible to be very definite about this date as there is no direct evidence of it. It is, however, very likely that he was initiated into reading the alphabet at his mother's village, Binhi, near modern Janakpur, for his maternal grandfather was well off and his father was studying at Gandhwati. But at the early age of seven his mother died and the young boy found himself an orphan. Under such circumstances the responsibility and affection of a father naturally increases. Hence it seems likely that on the death of his mother, the task of bringing him up, particularly educating him, fell on the shoulders of the father who took him along with himself to Darbhanga.

A year after this Mm. Jayadeva Mishra left Darbhanga for Varanasi, where he joined the staff of the Darbhanga Pathashala run by Maharaja Lakshmishvar Singh. Thus, Umesha's education, properly speaking, began at the age of eight in 1903 at Varanasi. First he must have, in the usual manner of those days, learnt Tirhuta alphabet at home For this reason all his life he used it for his personal and social work. Later he might have acquired Devanagari He must have learnt the Roman alphabet upon being admitted to a school. It is not known if he joined any primary school According to the practice of those days his father himself looked after the boy's primary education—which consisted of *Amarakosh*, *Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi*, *Hitopadesha* and *Raghuvamsha*. On completing this course of traditional training, he was admitted to the Bengali Tola High School at Varanasi. From there he passed the Matriculation examination in 1914 at the age of eighteen obtaining the highest marks in Sanskrit for which he was awarded the Shiromani gold medal.

It is necessary at this stage to mention a few important details about the contemporary educational scene. The controversy between the traditional and the European educational systems that had arisen towards the end of the last century had by now nearly ended As in other parts of India the modern system of education had gradually come to stay in Mithila too. But here traditionally educated families still looked down upon it. The Pandits called this system as "studying English" on the basis of the medium of instruction that was used for imparting it, not at all taking into consideration the subjects which were taught—which perhaps they neither knew nor cared to find out. They regarded English as a language of the *mlechhas* (the non-Aryan outcastes). They were convinced that by reading English one was likely to abandon one's traditions, which was time to some extent. Hence, if any one allowed one's ward to go for the remunerative "English" education, he was sure to be looked down upon by the members of his community.

Under such circumstances Mm. Jayadeva Mishra must have found himself in a dilemma as to which kind of education he should give to his son. Eventually he must have been inclined towards the "English" education in that he allowed his son to be admitted to a High School. Had he taken the decision to give only Sanskrit education to his son Mm. Umesh Mishra would not have become what he did later in life. It is also probable that being educated along the purely Sanskrit lines, he could have been an erudite Sanskrit scholar and might have even earned the title of Mahamahopadhyaya, but in the absence of new learning he could not have contributed to Mithila and the national life to the extent that he eventually did.

Mm. Jayadeva Mishra was a staunch orthodox Pandit, but he continued to give his son the benefit of modern education. This speaks volumes for his boldness and progressive thinking. It is possible that his liberalism was the outcome of his long sojourn in a city like Varanasi. Several other contemporary Pandits of Mithila had been disillusioned by the future of purely Sanskrit education and had begun to initiate their sons into modern education. I abstain here from naming them. Moreover, what seems most likely to

be the reason for this decision was the example of Sir Ganganatha Jha whom he had watched ever since his childhood days, and was probably highly impressed by the way in which Sir Ganganatha was pursuing his studies. For Sir Ganganatha had taken to modern education but had not completely given up Sanskrit education, indeed, he had achieved a judicious combination of western knowledge and thought and ideals of scholarship without abandoning traditional values.

Mm. Jayadeva Mishra must have noticed this unique quality in the career of Sir Ganganath Jha—the ideal combination of the East and the West—that made him adopt it for his son This factor played an important role in the life of Mm. Umesh Mishra. Thus, he matriculated from the Bengali Tola High School at Varanasi in much the same manner as Sir Ganganatha had from the Raj School at Darbhanga some years ago. At this examination he won the Shiromani gold medal for getting the highest marks in Sanskrit as he had been simultaneously trained in Sanskrit grammar and literature by his father at home.

On his successful completion of the Matriculation, in view of the increasing importance of English education, Mm Mishra was in quandary as to where he should continue his education in Varanasi —at the Government Sanskrit College or at the Centrel Hindu College/Queen's College. However, it appears that under the influence of his father he first joined the Government Sanskrit College as a student of the Madhyama class. The principal of the College in those days was Dr. A. Venis, a celebrated Indologist. The young Umesha was easily attracted, by his achievements received ample encouragement and from him towards his cherished goal of becoming a modern Indologist. He successfully passed the Madhyama examination in 1916.

Once again he had to face the same dilemma—whether to opt for the 'Acharya' or the MA degree. By now the son had matured. So the father yielded to his son. The example of Sir Ganganath Jha was there. It was therefore decided that Umesh should pursue modern education, even though it must have put an extra burden on the lean pocket of his father. In those days at Varanasi there were two good

institutions for pursuing modern higher education—the Queen's College and the Central Hindu College. The queen's College was the older and more reputed. Besides, it had the added attraction of having the Government Sanskrit College inside its compound. Still, Mm. Mishra joined the Central Hindu College. There were many reasons for this choice. Not the least of them was the higher fees charged at the Queen's College. On the other hand, the newly-established Central Hindu College was less expensive. Moreover, Sir Ganganatha Jha, the disciple of Mm. Jayadeva Mishra, had played an important role in establishing this College. In his autobiographical notes Sir Ganganath Jha explained this situation in detail :

> While we were still in College in 1890 the idea was mooted within our circle, of starting a cheaper college nearer to the city than the Queen's College. This idea gradually developed in people's mind and on the arrival Mrs Besant at Benaras and her decision to make Benares her headquarters, quickly led to the foundation of the Central Hindu College....Mrs Besant was the president of the managing committee, B. Upendranath Basu, the Vice-President and B. Bhagwandas the Secretary...They wanted me to join the teaching staff...Though I did not actually join the staff, I was very intimately connected with the management. .
>
> However, the fact was, that so long as Pt. Sunder Lall lived I put in my level best for the Hindu College and the Hindu University, devoting several hours and even entire days without food to the work.[1]

Hence, it is obvious why Mm. Jayadeva Mishra preferred this newly-established college of great hopes. Moreover, the establishment of this college was an indirect fulfilment of three strong emotional urges, namely, the sentiments for promoting Hinduism, the aspiration of freedom, and a leaning towards spiritualism of the theosophical variety. Obviously both father and son were also attracted by such

1. The Autobiographical Notes of Mm Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha, pp. 92-93.

idealism. The college was affiliated to the Hindu University. It was here that the Hindu University was housed in the beginning. Even when the University moved to its new site, the management of the college continued to be in its hand.

No further changes took place in the educational career of Dr Umesh Mishra after entering this college. He continued his studies with exclusive attention on modern lines in the college and followed the traditional course at the feet of his father at home. In 1918 he passed the Intermediate Examination from the Central Hindu College, in 1920 he obtained the BA degree and in 1922 the MA in Sanskrit (philosophy group) from the Benaras Hindu University.

It took some time for the results to be published and then same more time passed in search of a suitable job. Meanwhile he utilised this gap in refreshing his knowledge of Sanskrit successfully passed the Kavya Tirtha Examination of the Bengal Sanskrit Association as a private candidate.

Unfortunately, all this while Mm. Mishra did not get any opportunity to study directly or under the aegis of Sir Ganganatha Jha. He had left the Queen's College in 1916 before Sir Ganganatha Jha joined it two years later in 1918. And by then Mm. Mishra had joined the Central Hindu College. Similarly in 1922 when he had finished his MA, he found that Sir Ganganath Jha had left Varanasi to join the Allahabad University as Vice-Chancellor.

After Sir Ganganath Jha, Mm. Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj became the Principal of the Government Sanskrit College. He was highly impressed with Mm. Mishra's talents and took him as one of his favourite students. Under his guidance he was initiated into the realms of modern research and the critical study of Indology.

Mm. Mishra's education was over by 1923 and he entered the second stage of his life.

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V

In the Temple of the Mother Tongue

> It very frequently happens that our scholars neglect their mother tongue—they are so very much wrapped in admiration of a great classical language like Sanskrit that they have no time to do any service to their mother tongue. There have been some conspicuous examples to the contrary and in Mithila itself we have a number of fine scholars from medieval times, with the origin and establishment of the Maithili language who have rendered service to both Maithili and Sanskrit beginning with Halayudha and Jyotirishwara.[1]

Mm. Mishra was a fine specimen of this very tradition.

It is natural that one begins to enjoy the beauties of the folklore of one's mother tongue even while one is in one's mother's lap—whether its literature is developed or undeveloped. Mm. Mishra could not have been an exception to this rule. But as his mother had expired when he was only seven, he could not enjoy the beauty of folklore from his mother's mouth. Still, wherever he went with his father he had the opportunity of enjoying Maithili along with serious discourses and delightful light literature in Sanskrit.

After the demise of his mother, Mm. Mishra came to Darbhanga with his father at the age of seven. Here he lived for a year. At this place, as has been said earlier, there was a sufficiently large gathering of renowned scholars under the patronage of Maharaj Lakshmishwar Singh. Many of these scholars who had dedicated themselves to the upliftment of

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1. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee in the Umesh Mishra commemoration volume, *Messages and Tributes*, pp. 9, Ganganath Jha Research Institute Allahabad.

their mother tongue, Maithili, later came to be recognised as creators of modern Maithili literature. Kavishwar Chanda Jha was an impromptu poet. He composed exceptional Nachari songs in praise of Lord Shiva and Parvati and other wonderful songs in Maithili. He used to sing them too. The uniqueness of his compositions lay in that young and old, scholars and laymen were alike bewitched by them and their patriotic appeal. Umesh heard them as a child and all his life their influence haunted him.

Chalu Shiva Kobarak Chali he dopta arhu Bhola

Achi bhari nagar hakaar he bhalmanus tola. [1]

By then a portion his *Mithila Bhasha Ramayan* had already been published. Many a stanza from it could be heard on the lips of girls and women all over Mithila. Verses like the following :

Ha Raghunatha anathajanka dashakanthapuri hamaayali chhi

Sinaghaka trasen mahaban men harinik saman deraayal chhi. [2]

These lines of the great epic composed by the devoted son of Mithila worked like magic in sowing the seeds of love for his mother tongue in the mind of young Umesh. The great Pandit Rajje Mishra who later became the first lecturer in Maithili in Calcutta University and there, for the curriculum, procured and copied several Maithili works including *Varnaratnakara*, the famous work of Jyotirishwira. Mm. Parameshwar Jha was the celebrated antiquarian who wrote *Mithila-tattvavimarsha* about the history of Mithila and a long story called "Simantini Akhyayika" in the traditional manner. There was also Munshi Raghunandanadas who wrote various works like *Mithila Nataka* that came to be regarded at classics of modern Maithili in subsequent years.

1. "O Shiv ! wrap yourself with a wrapper and walk in the manner of a bridegroom. All the good people in the village have been invited !"
2. "Ah ! Raghunath I find myself in the city of Ravana, like an orphan ! Like a deer afraid of the lion, I am panic-stricken !"

In this circle of scholars the problem of Maithil was often debated upon. We learn from several reliable sources that at that time they established a Society called 'Mithila-Anusandhana-Samiti' under the presidentship of Chetanatha Jha (brother of Sarasa-kavi Ishnatha Jha's grandfather) resident of Nabatol, Keshi Mishra, BA, resident of Pahitol worked as its Secretary. Among the prominent members of the Society were: Mm. Mukunda Jha Bakhshi, Mm. Parameshwar Jha, Kavishwar Chanda Jha, Munshi Raghunandandas, Pandit Yoganand Kumar, Babu Tulapati Singh, Pandit Gananath Jha (elder brother of Sir Ganganath Jha), and others. They used to assemble at Darbhanga, and young Umesh must have heard their debates with more than ordinary curiosity. All this must have had a profound effect on the child's formative years. His young mind could not but be highly impressed with the love and dedicated attachment of these stalwarts to their motherland and mother tongue. It is quite natural that such early experiences created a lasting influence so as to act as a beacon in later years.

In 1903 Mm. Mishra came to Varanasi along with his father. At that time Varanasi was the highest centre of Indian learning. Therefore Maithil Pandits who were innately devoted to learning were easily attracted to it and lived here in a large number. *Mithila Moda*, the Maithili monthly, was launched in 1905, under the editorship of the great Jyotishi Mm. Muralidhar Jha and its publication continued uninterrupted for 16 years (till 1921–22). Charitable houses such as Rani Chandravati's Shyama Mandir, Tara Mandir, Darbhanga Pathashala, the Durbar of Maharani Lakshmivati Sahiba, the consort of Lakshmishwar Sinha of Darbhanga, the Durbar of the Maharaja of Kashiraj, etc. were places where Maithils gathered and received patronage and encouragement in the pursuit of learning and religious studies. There was another institution of the Maithils called 'Maithil-Vidvajjana-Samiti' (The Society of Learned Maithils). Among these Maithil Pandits of Varanasi there were a large number who were primarily attached to Maithili along with Sanskrit. All this had an inevitable influence on Mm. Mishra's scholarly life.

Still, it seems that all through his student days he mainly cherished Sanskrit. His love for his mother tongue was present, however, like the waters of Saraswati river hidden inside his heart. There was good reason for such a situation. His father Mm. Jayadeva Mishra was an orthodox Pandit, given to pure scholarship. It is quite probable that he held the view that during student life any deviation to light reading or pleasant creativity will drive away a student from the path of pure scholarship. In those days all strict guardians and mentors generally held such views. Nevertheless, one could somehow be tolerated as long as one read some literature in Sanskrit or practiced versifying in Sanskrit, but writing verses or composing songs in the vernacular was considered an unpardonable sin ! From his early boyhood days Mm. Mishra was very obedient and gentle by nature. So it was natural that the matter of the education was wholly under the discipline of his father and all his life he avoided light-hearted creativity in Maithil. The same was true of his Sanskrit writings too. Whatever he wrote has to be classified much above light literature.

It is difficult to fix the date when he began writing in Maithili. His earliest writing that has come to my notice is dated 1922. It is a research-oriented serious essay on 'The Art of Stealing', published in the monthly journal *Mithila Moda* brought out by the 'Society of Learned Maithils' of Varanasi. It may be observed in passing that it was in this year that he had finished his studies and became free from the disciplined life of a student. Since then his articles began to appear in various Maithili magazines. But undoubtedly the neo-renaissance that had begun in 1905 at Varanasi and which enthused learned Maithils of Varanasi to enrich the Maithili literature with dedication exercised profound influence on him even during his student days.

On completing his education Mm. Mishra came to Allahabad in 1923. Here the environment was not as pro-Mithila as in Varanasi. But then as the saying goes "Alone the moon is capable of dispelling darkness", so here was a scholar of the eminence of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha, who was himself sufficient to inspire and draw Mm. Mishra into the world of Maithili with dedication and confidence.

At this juncture the progress of Maithili depended not so much on how far creative writing could be promoted as on its publicity in the masses and its recognition by the Government. On arriving at Allahabad he plunged himself headlong into the cause of Maithili on both scores. He took up the task of promoting Maithili beyond what it had achieved in the generation before, owing to the efforts of Chanda Jha and Sir George Grierson. With the blessings of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha and the active cooperation of his son Dr Amaranath Jha, who was as ardent as himself, he marched ahead in the manifold service of Maithili.

The Maithili movement did not aim at fighting any authority in power or any particular class or caste. It was a fight based in its own home, with its own people; it was a clarion call to arouse the common man to realise his duty towards his mother tongue and culture. It is not possible to give a detailed account of this struggle in the short biographical monograph for fear of drifting into a digression. Still, it may suffice to clinch the issue by stating that in the last years of the nineteenth century the British rulers responsible for introducing vernacular education in Mithila somehow bypassed the claims of Maithili and the Maithili speakers who are suffering till this day from the consequences of this omission. For this reason, more vital than promoting the enrichment of Maithili literature, was the task of achieving the full-fledged recognition of Maithili and restoring it to a respectable place in the educational system and general life of the people.

The leaders of the Maithili movement in the first generation of the Renaissance in Mithila such as Mm. Muralidhara Jha, Mm. Parameshvara Jha, Kavishvara Chanda Jha and others were dead by the year 1926. Those of the new generation who succeeded them were led by prominent workers like Babu Bholalal Das, Rajpandit Baldeva Mishra and Narendranath Das. In 1926 they founded the All India Maithili Sahitya Parishad at Darbhanga and three years later, organised a large meeting at Ghonghardiha. It was presided over by Mm. Mishra. In those days he was just a young man of 34–35. He had just obtained his Doctorate and had not yet become a Mahamahopadhyaya, but he had

delved deep into the old literature of Maithili and his passionate attachment towards his mother tongue had become so widely known that he was chosen to be the President even when there were a large number of senior scholars present. His presidential address was so impressive and marked by such a scholarly approach that it was immediately hailed as a landmark in Maithili studies and was easily accepted as a document of great historic value; it has been reprinted several times, and has become since popular all over the land.

It was at this very time that a splendid monthly called *Mithila* began its publication under the joint editorship of Babu Bholalaldas and Pandit Kusheshwar Kumar. The weekly *Mithila-Mihira and the monthly Mithila-Moda* were more or less being regularly published. In 1930 a Committee called 'Mithilaksharankan Prabandhak Samiti' established with the active cooperation of Pandit Jivanath Rai and others became a source of Maithili letters. Even the Maithil Mahasabha was undergoing a sea change. All told these things constituted the second wave of awakening in the Maithili movement. During this period two kinds of work were accomplished : in the first place, work that may be described as giving publicity and popularity to Maithili; and secondly that which promoted its creativity. Mm. Mishra led the way in both fields—of course, he served Maithili more on to scholarly side than the creative.

The contribution of Mm. Mishra to Maithili is invaluable. He collected a large amount of material in the form of books, periodicals, manuscripts, etc. and gave a special impetus to the development of prose, in particular made the spelling of scientific words. He compiled and critically edited several old classics, and generally promoted the progress of Maithili literature by contributing to creative, and especially critical literature. Wherever and whenever he got an opportunity to refute the arguments of the detractors of Maithili, he silenced them with appropriate reasoning. Throughout Mithila and even outside it he lent his support to the intellectuals to know and appreciate the place of Maithili language and literature in the comity of Modern Indian languages. He gave an impetus to the Renaissance in Maithili by laying the founda-

tions of several institutions. Above all, he inspired a large number of educated men and initiated them into the ways of serving Maithili. This has been his greatest contribution to Maithili literature for which he is regarded as one of its most important makers. Details of his important contributions are to follow later in these pages.

As soon as Mm. Mishra became conscious of his duty towards his mother tongue, he began to collect each and every book, magazine and manuscript of early Maithili literature. Fortunately this has become a tradition in his family, through the efforts of Dr Jayakanta Mishra, his eldest son who has been engaged in this task from his early years, so that today this family has perhaps the largest ever collection of Maithili Literature.

Although the Renaissance in Maithili came into being at the beginning of this century, for long a connected history of Maithili literature could not be worked for want of the knowledge of the works and identity of early writers and also because the materials were not available at any one place. Therefore, Mm. Mishra gave priority to the work of such a collection. Thereafter he engaged himself in constructing a chronological survey. The first results of his efforts in this direction came to light in his Presidential address at Ghonghardiha which has already been discussed.

Since then he went on publishing personal accounts of early writers in several learned Introductions and stray essays. Eventually he entrusted the task of writing the history of Maithili—like a bequest—to his son Dr Jayakanta Mishra who completed the task with admirable learning, zest and industry. Thus, we have today his *A History of Maithili Literature* in two volumes. Later many other scholars such as Prof. Ramanath Jha and Babu Lakshmipati Singh also worked on Mithila with special reference to the history of Maithili literature but the results of their labour have not come to light in chronological sequence. Wherever the history of Maithili literature was discussed, the views of Mm. Mishra were quoted with respect even though later research might have created many doubts about them.

Mm. Mishra had studied Sanskrit literature and Philosophy up to the highest level on modern lines. In the traditional system of education there was a total absence of historical perspective. But the end of the last century and in the beginning of the present century, a large number of foreign scholars, in particular Indologists, imparted a historical sense to Indian scholars. Mm. Mishra, therefore, developed a profound historical sense from the modern system of education. Even while teaching Sanskrit, he utilised this historical critical method. Taking up Sanskrit literature, particularly Indian Philosophy, for a historical survey meant including nearly 50 per cent of the history of Mithila and its learned men. This obviously included the history of Maithili literature and a study of the life and times of Maithil writers. For, most of the old writers of Maithili were the learned scholars of their times and most of them had contributed to Sanskrit along with Maithili. Thus, Mm. Mishra could naturally make an acquintance with a large number of Maithili writers while studying the history of Sanskrit. While writing the history of Indian Philosophy (which we will discuss a little later) he had to go through the entire history of Mithila and its scholars as is amply clear from the pages of this work. It is in this way that Mm. Mishra is regarded as one of architects of the history of Maithili literature.

Modern prose developed in Maithili since 1905, when Maithili journals made their appearance. Fiction, criticism and essays began to be written in the prevalent spoken idiom of those days. Maithili prose prior to this date is not written in the contemporary colloquial idiom but rather in an archaic style. The colloquial idiom kept on changing from time to time with new pronunciations and new turns of expression but the written form of Maithili continued to be archaic as was current hundreds of years ago. The modern spoken Maithili could not be written accurately in the traditional style. It was therefore natural that the modern writers used new spellings and forms for new pronunciation and styles of Maithili, current in modern times. Thus, individual writers adopted their own individual spellings and forms.

There seemed to have arisen a certain amount of lawlessness and variety in the writings of modern times. The

contemporary scholars of Maithili regarded such a state of affairs as undesirable for the development of Maithili. Thus came into existence the problem of standardisation of spellings of Maithili words which in those days was known as *shaili* or *lekhashaili* (style of writing). Earlier Mm. Muralidhara Jha, the editor of *Mithila-Mode*, and other editors of journals had made some efforts in this direction, but the confusion continued and no solution could be found. Therefore, the All India Maithili Sahitya Parishad, over which Mm. Mishra had presided at its Third Annual Session of Ghonghardiha, took upon itself the task of setting it right and at its sixth Annual Session of Muzaffarpur which was well attended and given wide publicity, the Shaili-Nirdharna Samiti (the Committee for the standardisation of Maithili spellings) was formed. Mm. Mishra was asked to preside over it. He made a thorough study of the problem and then propounded in his presidential speech a complete account of the spellings in Maithili as should be accepted for standardisation.

The above Committee discussed the problem threadbare and Pandit Jivanatha Ray published the *Maithili Lekhashaili*. Some time later, Prof. Ramanatha Jha consulted a large number of scholars and arrived at certain conclusions which he put into practice in his celebrated quarterly journal, *Sahitya Patra*. Ramanatha Jha drew inspiration from and based his conclusions mainly on the views of three—Mahavaiakaran Dinabandhu Jha, Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra and Dr Subhadra Jha. Among these three the points of difference were very few and eventually what proform a Ramanatha Jha adopted was virtually Mm Mishra's spellings as enunciated earlier. Broadly, however, he differed from Mm. Mishra in the spellings of the objective case as *Kai* whereas the *Sahitya Patra* preferred it as *Ke*. Later this very style (like the famous MLA style sheet) with minor changes here and there, chief of which was the replacement of *'ya'* for short *'e'* was adopted by the *Mithilamihira*, Maithili Akadami of Patna and other publishers and popularised as the standard spelling of Maithili today.

The staunchest followers of the spelling reform of Mm. Mishra or the *Sahitya Patra* were Dr Subhadra Jha, Prof. Ramanatha Jha, Babu Lakshmipati Singh, Upendra Nath

Jha 'Vyas', Prof. Tantranatha Jha, Prof. Umanath Jha, and Dr Jayakanta Mishra among others. From the above facts it becomes clear that the credit of giving a standard spelling system to Maithili words based on scientific lines goes largely to Mm. Mishra. His were the views which were systematically expounded for the first time and have stood the test of time till this day.

It has been mentioned earlier that Mm. Mishra avoided writing light literature during his student days which is described in Maithili as Rajani Sajani perhaps from the rhyming of the word Rajani with Sajani—in other words by this he meant easy rhyme-making or poetry. What he shunned in his student days, he shunned the rest of his life. I have not seen any Sanskrit or Maithili verse written by him even out of curiosity. He remained purely a prose writer. His genius in all its brilliance found a new face, which had no artificiality in it, none of the arrogance of the scholar, nor any touch of vulgarity. Prose writers in Maithili who preceded him believed that the use of the maximum number of Sanskrit words alone could lend charm to their writing—somewhat in the manner of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar who wrote Bengali prose. They failed to realise that Maithili has its own idiomatic beauty, its own social sophisticated grace and useful turns of expression which deserve to be exploited. Some writers would affectedly introduce such unpalatably Sanskritised coinages that were not simply acceptable to the readers. As an illustration of this tendency one may refer to the prose of Mm. Mukunda Jha Bakshi in his work *A History of the House of Khandwa*. In this respect, one may say Mm. Mishra's prose combined the individual merits of both Mm. Parameshwara Jha as well as Mm Muralidhara Jha. His prose has two clear styles : one which may be described as popular or work-a-day and the other as scholarly. The popular style was used in his creative writings and the scholarly style in his critical and argumentative writings. In conclusion, it may be observed that the contribution of Mm. Mishra to the development of Maithili prose is exceptionally valuable.

Like Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar himself, the creative faculty of Mm.Mishra was either limited or he made a limited use of it. Like him again, whatever creative writing he did was more inspired by the desire to serve his mother tongue, and by taking the lead himself he wished to draw other talented writers also to write in their mother tongue. In such works he felt that the presence of aesthetic pleasure was necessary in a greater degree—both in subject matter as well as style. Moreover, in this sphere he was not prompted to deviate very much fundamentally from the tradition of his earlier masters. This was the reason why he chose to write on similar subjects as his elder writers. This accounts for his writing *Nalopakhyan* (The Story of Nala) and many such narratives. He wrote five tales and all of them belong to the same tradition and the same style. His single novel is *Kamala* which was perhaps partly published sometime before 1920, and could not be completed. The prose of ths work must have been somewhat different from that of the above mentioned works.

His distinct prose style is to be seen in his critical essays, such as *Maithil Sanskriti O Sabhyata* (Maithil Culture and Civilisation), 1961; several introductory studies to works edited by him, numerous miscellaneous thought-provoking essays; and the addresses and lectures.

Mm. Mishra had taken up the self-appointed task of educating and aquainting the rest of the world with Maithili language and literature. He would take up this matter mostly through Hindi and English magazines and journals or in lectures at public meetings and conferences or in personal discussions. It was through his good offices that the international organisation PEN recognised Maithili as a literary language and gave it a berth in its All India Conference. Through his article entitled *Maithili 1900–1945*, in the PEN Report called *The Indian Literature Today* he acquainted men of letters all over India and abroad with Maithili. Similarly, through the quarterly, *Hindustani*, published from Allahabad he could acquaint the Hindi speaking world with Maithili. With the intention of giving publicity to the greatest Maithili poet and his works outside Mithila, he wrote a book on

Vidyapati Thakur which has run into four editions. He broadcast several times from the All India Radio about Maithili language and literature. That is why he has been regarded as the ablest watchman ever to guard the interests and rights of the Maithili language and literature.

Of all the steps that Mm. Mishra took to give publicity to Maithili, perhaps the most important was the establishment of the All India Maithil Sahitya Samiti under whose auspices was organised an Exhibition of Books and Magazines at Delhi. It was here that a large number of distinguished litterateurs of various languages and also the then Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had the opportunity of seeing at first hand the old and new literatures of Maithili and thereby made to realise for the first time that Maithili is actually an independent literary modern Indian language of some magnitude and that it deserves a place on par with Bengali, Assamese and other regional languages. It is said that Maithili was recognised by the Sahitya Akademi because the Members of the Sahitya Akademi were highly impressed by this Exhibition.

The Sanskrit pandits of Mithila frequently explain Sanskrit words in their works by giving their equivalent Maithili words. Mm. Mishra collected such archaic words with utmost care and industry. There are several essays written by him on this subject—(i) "Candeshwar Thakur and Maithili;" *Allahabad University Studies*, Vol. VII, (ii) "Maithili and Rucipati;" and (iii) "Maithili and Jagadhara" (both published in the same issue of the *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, 1928).

Mm. Mishra was fond of Maithili journals and magazines When on completing his studies in 1922 he turned his attention to Maithili, he began to occasionally publish his essays and articles in them. Perhaps his first essay came out in *Mithila-Moda* published from Varanasi in 1922. Thereafter in 1923 were published his essays on "Tirhuta (Maithili) script", the "Art of Disputation" (*Shastrartha Paripati*), "Shankar Mishra and His Writings" and others. In *Mithila Mihira*, in its special number called *Mithilanka* (1935), was published "Mithila, Maithil and Maithili" and later on "Desha-Dasha" (The Situation in the Country) in a serial form. In

1943 on 24 July a Maithili translation of his English essay "Some Confusion in Sankhyatattva-Kaumudi" as well as answers and rejoinders to it was published in *Mithila Mihir*. *Vaidehi* (a monthly from Darbhanga) serialised a series of valuable essays on Maithil culture and civilisation, which were later brought out as a two part book. *Swadesh* (a monthly from Darbhanga) finally brought out his famous sketches of various seasons in Mithila. An extract from this is prescribed in the anthology of prose and verse meant for intermediate classes.

Mm. Mishra resuscitated several old works of Maithili from oblivion and edited them along with providing critical notation. The first such work that claimed his attention was Manabodh's (1870–90) *Krishnajanma* which was brought out by Pustakbhandar, Laheriaserai in 1934. Later editions of this work were published by Tirabhakti Publication of Allahabad. Then he critically edited Vidyapati's famous classic, *Kirtlata*, with a Maithili translation in 1960 for the All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti, Allahabad. In the following year (1962) he brought out another rare text by Vidyapati *Kirtipataka*, which was edited by him in collaboration with his able son Dr Jayakanta Mishra.

During these years when the University of Patna recognised Maithili as a subject of its examinations, he brought out an anthology of prose and poetry for High Schools and called it *Maithili Gadya Kusumanjali* and got it published by the All India Maithili Sahitya Parishad in 1936 from Laheriaserai.

In 1948 the All India Oriental Conference organised its Fourteenth Session at Darbhanga with the efforts of Mm. Mishra. He utilised this occasion to introduce a local language section in Maithili where several brilliant pieces of writing connected with Mithila and Maithili in almost all forms were presented. The high status and prominence given to Maithili language as the regional language and Tirhuta as the regional script on this occasion of historic importance by Mm. Mishra in this learned body gave an emotional satisfaction to Maithili lovers throughout Mithila and their sense of self-respect was amply gratified.

At the same time, it must be said to the credit of Mm. Mishra that he did not allow local attachment to Maithili do any harm to the cause of the National language, Hindi. This careful handling of the situation was due to the influence of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha and Dr. Amaranath Jha who were well-known patrons and protagonists of the national language. As a result the age-old tradition of amity between the lovers of both languages in Mithila was kept up by Mm. Mishra and the promoters of Maithili never degenerated into a state of chaotic squabbling.

Two Sanskrit works are said to have been translated into Maithili during these years—one, Ishwarkrishna's *Sankhyakarika* and the other Vishwanatha's *Sahityadarpana*. They are, however, still unpublished.

One more contribution of Mm. Mishra's to Maithili is worth mentioning. It was quite likely that the Maithili movement could degenerate into a mere agitation. Fortunately, mature and thoughtful patriotic leaders like Mm Mishra were leading the Maithili movement, with the result that the opposition to Hindi was never bitter, Indeed Hindi had always been considered in Mithila as the National Language of the country. This patriotic feeling he had imbibed from Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha and Dr Amarnath Jha who were staunch supporters and promoters of the cause of Hindi. Thus, it goes to the credit of Mm. Mishra that the movement for Maithili remained peaceful.

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VI

In the Temple of the National Language

Mm. Umesh Mishra's veritable kinsman, Dr Amaranath Jha, boldly made the declaration :

> I love my mother tongue Maithili, revere the National Language Hindi; and adore the Language of the gods Sanskrit.

Every enlightened Maithil or for that matter every discriminating citizen of India agrees with this view of Dr Jha. Mm. Mishra, of course, endorsed it through his actions. In the previous chapter we have seen how attached he was to his mother tongue. In the present chapter we will see how profound was his regard for the national language and what were his achievements in this field.

The thrust of Mm. Mishra's studies was in the fields of Indian philosophy and Sanskrit literature. From the very beginning, he made a place for himself among prominent orientalists. Orientalists of those days, whether Indian or foreign, adopted English, German or French as the medium of their expression. Outside this was the realm of Sanskrit which was only somewhat intelligible to the Orientalists the world over, but it could not be modernised enough to attain the status of exchanging Orientalist knowledge for the simple reason that there were many Orientalists whose acquaintance with Sanskrit was nominal and could follow it only with the help of translations. Moreover, by taking recourse to a foreign language even an ordinary scholar could hope to get fame in foreign countries. On this point the following observations of Dr Sir Ganganath Jha are worth consideration :

> My main literary work has been done in the English language. The reason for this had been

> mostly utilitarian. Ever since my boyhood I had noticed that those scholars who had written their works in English had received a better and larger appreciation than those who did so in an Indian language. This idea of mine had been fully confirmed in my own experience....my old friend Mm. Pt. Ramavatara Sharma of Chhapra and Patna was a much sounder scholar of Sanskrit and far better equipped in modern scholarship than me, and yet he did not become as well-known beyond Calcutta, Patna and Benares as I am, and the only reason for this was that while I worked in English, he worked in Hindi. Of course, his is the greater credit, but I have only given an explanation why I took to work in English. The example and influence of Dr Thibaut and Dr Venis also led me in this direction.[1]

Moreover, it is also true that publishers in Hindi in any Indian language were few and far between. Forced by such circumstances Mm. Mishra wrote most of his serious research works on Philosophy in English. However, Dr Sir Ganganath Jha had described the situation as it existed in 1900. Mm. Dr Mishra started writing some twenty to thirty years later, and in between some change had taken place. Hindi gradually began to acquire an all-India status. Mm. Mishra fully appreciated the changing situation. Hence as and when he got opportunities to write in Hindi, he adopted it as the medium of his writings. He passed the longest part of his life in Allahabad. In those days Allahabad was the stronghold of Hindi. The headquarters of the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was at Allahabad. A vigorous publishing house like the Hindustani Academy was also situated there. Mm. Mishra was constantly associated with both these institutions. His profound love for Maithili never vitiated his great reverence for Hindi. As a result of this he wrote several works in Hindi. He used to contribute now and then to Hindi journals. As a result, he achieved widespread popularity in the Hindi world as well. He was elected the President of

1 *Autobiographical Notes of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha,* pp. 124–125

Religion and Philosophy Section for the Meerut session of the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan While writing in Hindi brought him repute in the world of Hindi, it enhanced the status of Hindi itself, for till then erudite scholars rarely wrote in Hindi, in fact, very few wrote scholastic treatises.

His Hindi writings can be divided into three subject-wise categories. The first category comprises his philosophical works. Hindi did not yet need profound, advanced researches in the realm of philosophy. It was necessary at that time that there should be a work which even a student of philosophy, ignorant of Sanskrit and English, could follow and have an introduction to an accurate and comprehensive knowledge of Indian philosophy in a general way. From this viewpoint he wrote three works in Hindi . (i) *Bharatiya Tarkashastra Ki Rooprekha* (1950); (ii) *Sankhya-Yoga Darshan* (1958); and (iii) *Bharatiya Darshan* (1960). All three are written in a thoroughly authentic, lucid and simple style which made him well-known as a writer of philosophical works in Hindi. By that time he was already a celebrity in the Hindi world and had been elected the President of Religion and Philosophy section of the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of 1948. His presidential speech on *Bharatiya Darshan Ki Rooprekha* (Outlines of Indian Philosophy) is itself a veritable masterpiece of this very category.

The second category of his Hindi writings consists of the essays and books he wrote to make the Hindi knowing persons acquainted with the precise nature of the glory and achievements of Maithil language and literature which have been described in the previous chapter.

In the last and third category is included his miscellaneous essays and articles in Hindi which were mostly published in various commemoration or Felicitation volumes and some periodicals. Among them the noteworthy ones are—(i) "Rigveda me Karma Vichar" (Theory of Karma in Rig-Veda) in the Srikrishna Singh Felicitation Volume; (ii) "Bharatiya Darshana Ka Swarupa—Nirupan" (The Nature of Indian Philosophical System) in the *Vikrama* commemoration volume, published from Gwalior, (iii) "Prachin Bharat me Shalya Vidya" (The Science of Surgery in Ancient India) in the

Vikrama Commemoration Volume, published from Kanpur; (iv) "Govardhanacharya aur Unaki Saptashati" (Govardhanacharyna and His Saptashati) published in *Vaishali* from Muzaffarpur, etc.

While Mm. Mishra exhibited inflexibility and bigotry in matters of religion, in so far as using a language as medium was concerned, he was liberal. The healthy trend of serving Maithili along with Hindi which he set was very beneficial for Hindi. As a result of this an atmosphere of linguistic amity has prevailed in the Maithili speaking areas, for which due credit goes to far-sighted discriminating scholars like Mm. Mishra.

It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that in 1966 the Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sahitya Sammelean honoured him with the honorary title of Sahitya-Vandhi (Ocean of Learning).

VII

In the Realms of Indian Philosophy

Mithila has been recognised as the home of Indian philosophy. Tirhut (Mithila) was the birthplace and the field of activity for "Akshapada, Vatsyayana and Udyotkara[1]. The illustrious scholar who is known to have written commentaries on all the six Orthodox Systems of Hindu Philosophy, Vriddha Vachaspati (841 A.D.), belonged to this very region and since his days "Tirhut enjoyed absolute authority in the field of Nyaya Shastra (Science of Reasoning)"[2]. This tradition continued in Mithila with some periods of rise and fall till end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. When at Varanasi Bhattoji Dikshit, Nagesh Bhatt and Bal Shastri through the lineage of teachers developed the new school of Grammar it reached Mithila too ; and it did reduce the popularity of Philosophy, but the development of Navya Nyaya (New-Logic) under the aegis of Udayana, Gangesha and Pakshadara kept up the study of philosophy. Later Navya Nyaya Philosophy entered the sphere of grammar as well and introduced the style of Neo-Logic in the study of grammar also, only those grammarians who were adept in Neo-Logic came to be regarded as erudite scholars.

> Not only this, every distinguished scholar whether a grammarian, *Mimamsaka*, or a *dharmashastri*, was necessarily required to study at least one standard work of each of the Six Orthodox Systems of Indian Philosophy, such as Sankhyatattvakaumudi (for Sankhya system), Vedanta Paribhasha (for Vedanta system), Muktavali Adhikaranakaumudi (for Nyaya system) and so on and so forth.

Mm. Mishra's father and his first preceptor Mm Jayadeva Mishra had been educated in Neo-Grammar of Bhattoji-Nagesh School, but had simultaneously acquired the basic knowledge of all the systems of Indian Philosophy and had mastered the Navya Nyaya and particularly its style of disputations. That is how he had attained a high position among the erudite Pandits of India. Following this ancestral and his region's tradition Mm. Mishra rightly chose his field of specialisation—Indian Philosophy. Father was primarily not a scholar of Nyaya (Logic) but that of Vyakaran (Grammar). It would have been natural that son should have first studied Vyakaran (Grammar), then Nyaya (Logic). But in the modern educational system which the foreigners introduced in India there is no importance of carrying on any study beyond *Ashtadhyayi* and *Kashika* (two standard works on Grammar). In the Sanskrit departments of the universities there are generally only two branches of specialization—Sahitya (Literature) and Darshan (Philosophy). Quite likely this was the reason why Mm. Mishra could not take up the study of Vyakarana (Grammar). Sahitya (Literature) was his subject of study but in Mithila it was never given of a scholastic status, rather it was treated mostly as a means light reading and recreation. As the Naiyayikas (scholars of Logic) of Mithila gradually lost interest in over-use of the practice of dry and rough reasoning, then to provide diversion to their minds they wrote or enjoyed reading Kavya (Literature)[1]. That was why neither the father (Mm Jayadeva Mishra) nor the son (Mm. Mishra) regarded it as a subject for serious study. The only other alternative was studying philosophy. Under these circumstances Mm. Mishra wholeheartedly plunged into the realms of philosophy.

In those days the traditional study of philosophy in Mithila was limited to two branches only—Nyaya and Mimamsa. Of these two, the science of Nyaya was resplendent, whereas Mimamsa was fast losing its splendour. Vendanta was practically extinct. Sankhya and Yoga were not regarded as subjects for serious study—rather it was

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1 Rahul Sankrityayan, in *Mithilanka*, p. 11
2 *Ibid.*

studied as a subsidiary of Nyaya. However in the modern system of education all the branches of Indian philosophy are taught together as one subject where, however, Navya Nyaya (New Logic) has been totally excluded. This has been done perhaps because though it is a useful study from the modern viewpoint yet it is regarded so difficult that for a modern scholar it is something unfathomable. As in the modern system of education all the branches of philosophy are taught together it is not possible to go deep into any one branch. Under such circumstances the traditional Pandit regarded the modern scholar as a "jack of all trades" but master of none, and the modern scholar regarded the traditional Pandit as parochial. However, Mm. Mishra took up the course in between the two, that is, comprehensive general study of philosophy of modern scholarship and the thorough profound study of a branch of philosophy of the traditional Pandit. This middle path served him admirably well, and quite early his fame spread among both, the topmost modern scholars as well as the learned traditional Pandits.

He studied philosphical texts first under his father. Later he must have studied under the learned Pandits of the Government Sanskrit College of Varanasi, but he used to regard Mm. Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj as his guide and preceptor. Pandit Kaviraj not only taught him, he instilled into him several of his ideals. He also initiated him into the methods of research on modern lines. It was thus that Mm. Mishra completed his studies in philosophy. He, however, remained devoted to the study of philosophy all his life. When on September 9, 1967 he breathed his last he was engaged in finalising the press copy of the third volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy*.

The philosophical writings of Mm.Mishra formed nearly 80 per cent of his total output in life. His most important contribution in the field of philosophy is his *History of Indian Philosophy*. It is interesting to recall how he happened to write this history.

> During 1934–35 Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha was requested to write a book on philosophy in Maithili. He wrote a brief introduction to Vedanta in Maithili and called it *Vedanta Deepak* and got it published by the

Maithili Sahitya Parishad of Darbhanga in 1936. Here he posed a new problem and gave a solution to it. The problem was briefly as follows :

If Truth is one and the ancient seers of India were as they are called the knowers of Truth, why did every seer, who founded his own system of philosophy, differ so much from another and create such differences among themselves ? Sir Ganganath explained this problem by propounding that in reality there are no differences among the various systems: they are each meant for different stages of mental equipment of the seeker of truth : that is why the Reality is expounded gradually from gross to subtle stages · thus the grossest philosophical system that was expounded was Vaishesika and the most refined one Vedanta This is how the Six Systems of Indian philosophy are a synthetic gradation towards the Highest Reality.

From this apparently simple proposition Mm. Mishra seems to have taken upon himself the task of expounding the history of Indian philosophy in his monumental work. Starting from a simple outline the inquiry acquired in the course of years wide dimensions, and the work begun around 1940 continued till the end of his life.

In the three volumes of this comprehensive work the evolution of Indian Philosophy is traced on wholly new and original way. But even more than this, the learned author has made the work more valuable by describing the life and work of Indian philosophers, particularly from Mithila, on the internal as well as external evidences in detail. This work has brought to limelight the work of an exceptionally large number of Maithil as well as non-Maithil philosophers and also the lost or obscure works by then for the first time. All those who attempted to trace the history of Indian philosophy had expounded the systems of philosophy more or less successfully but were little acquainted with the Maithil tradition, Maithil history and, the most important authentic source of it, the *Panji* (or traditional genealogical records), and therefore their account was naturally incomplete. They

were ignorant of the achievements of Mithila's learned men. Thus, Mm. Mishra's history served to give the history of Indian philosophy in its entirety—it does not suffer from any lacunae or distortion. It is written with such lucidity that those who have even a small interest in Indian philosophy may gain good knowledge of it. The first volume of this History was published in 1957 by Tirabhukti Publications of Allahabad and the second in 1966. The third volume is yet to see the light of day.

As has already been pointed out Mm. Mishra's studies in Indian philosophy were carried out on modern lines. Like Vriddha Vachaspati he gave equal attention to all the systems. His exposition of all the six systems is equally important. Below are given the details of his work on the various systems.

Vaisheshika System

He began his studies with the Vaisheshika system. He chose it as the special field of research for his D. Lit., *Conception of Matter according to Nayaya-Vaisesika*[1]. This research work was later published with some improvements by Tirabhukti Publications of Allahabad. Its Foreword was written by Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha. Here was a comprehensive treatment of all the seven elements separately—Dravya, Guna, Karma, Samanya, Vishekhe, Samavaya and Abhava.

He wrote several research papers also in this system, such as, "Physical Theory in Indian Thought" which was published in the Allahabad University Studies. Later came out "The Nature of Physical World according to Nyaya Vaidesika" "in the *Cultural Heritage of India* (Vol. IV) published by Ramkrishna Mission,Calcutta.

Sankhya Yoga System

Though this system, based on the threefold principle of creation is as old as the Puranas and the Mahabharata etc.,

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1. Actually this is the topic of Vaisheshika. But Nyaya recognises nearly the same or just a few more basic elements. That is why the name of this system was coupled with Nyaya in ancient tradition, see for example what Annabhatta says in *Tarkasangraha*. "The learned Aryabhatta has written *Tarksangraha* so that the Vaishesika system of Kanada and Nyaya may become intelligible to the ignorant."

yet in traditional approaches to Indian Philosophy it has not been given the same attention which Mimamsa and others have been given. Modern scholarship, however, has attached considerable importance to it. Hence it was quite obvious why Mm. Mishra choose it for specialization. He wrote several research papers and edited several of its texts. He has examined it in some detail in *History of Indian Philosophy* and also briefly its Hindi version, *Bharatiya Darshan* (1960).

On the Sankhya system his earliest paper called "Stray Thoughts on the Great Vachaspati and His Tattvakaumud" was presented to the Mysore session of the All India Oriental Conference in 1935 and later published in its proceedings. One of the possible insinuations in this paper (on the flaws of Vachaspati's interpretations) raised voices of disapprobation and protest from traditional pandits who could not swallow its inherent idea. Prof. Ramanatha Jha translated this paper into Maithili and published it in the vernacular weekly *Mithila Mihir* (issue dated 24th July, 1943) and invited the learned pandits to set right the rest the doubts regarding Vachaspati's views. In the next issue of the weekly, Mahavaiyakarana Pandit Dinabandhu Jha dispelled the doubts of Mm. Mishra and tried to establish the soundness of Vachaspati. Mm. Mishra published a rejoinder to this and the Mahavaiyakarana countered it in three issues of the weekly. The pandits of Mithila took profound interest in this controversy.

Whatever might have been the outcome of this controversy, one important result was the admiration of Mm. Mishra for the profound scholarship of Mahavaiyakarana Pandit Dinabandhu Jha so that when the Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning was founded and Mm. Mishra came as its first director he made it a point to appoint him as one of its traditional pandits.

Another paper of Mm. Mishra on this sytem of philosophy entitled "A Missing Karika of Sankhya Saptatika" was published in the *Journal of Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan* at Bombay.

In Hindi he wrote a book *Sankhya-Yoga Darshan* which was published in 1958 by Tirabhukti Publications at Allahabad. Though the independence of the two branches of philosophy is accepted yet the two have been taught

together traditionally. In later times in several current Sanskrit examinations they are even taken up as a single system. Interestingly, in the *Bhagwad Gita* it is said that "only ignorant pronounce the two as separate, but not those who know". This book in Hindi is a simple introduction to the subject.

Before this he had written two papers on Sankhya. One of them "Gaudapada and Matharvoth" was published in *Allahabad University Studies* Vol. VIII. The other "Pramanas in Sankhya" in *Sampurnanand Felicitation Volume* in 1950. In the first paper he has made a comparative study of two important commentaries on Sankhyasutras. In the second he has discussed the various sources of 'evidence'.

He also wrote a Sanskrit commentary on Ishwarkrishna's Karikas but it has not yet been published.

Yoga System

It appears Mm. Mishra had no special interest in Yoga, for no original study on this system was written by him. Perhaps even in his personal life also he had no interest in it. All that we may gather about his views on this branch of philosophy may be gathered from his Hindi works *Sankhya-Yoga* and *Bharatiya Darshan.*

Mimamsa System

Of all writings of Mm. Mishra on Mimamsa System the most useful and interesting is the paper entitled "Murarestritiyah Panthah" (The Third Approach of Murari), which was presented by him in the All India Oriental Conference and published in its Proceedings in 1928. After the great *Shabara-Bhasya* was written, the Mimamsa System was split into two independent divisions—one led by Kumaril Bhatta and known as the Bhatta School and the other led by Prabhakar and known as the Prabhakar School or the Guru School. Mm. Murari Mishra developed a wholly new school of Mimamsa thought. He neither followed Prabhakar nor Bhatta, but propounded a new school of Mimamsa. His contemporary Mimamsa philosophers acknowledged only two schools of Mimamsa thought as authentic—Bhatta and Prabhakar. Therefore they mocked at his originality by a phrase : "Murari

has a third way". In Sanskrit even today this phrase has assumed a proverbial ring as much as the Maithili proverb *Kanhi gaike bhinne bathan* ('the one-eyed cow seeks her own separate den). But the phrase could not continue to be a term for mockery of Murari Mishra; for eventually, the soundness of his views was recognized as the third alternative in this system. In this paper Mm. Mishra has demonstrated the distinctness of his views from those of Prabhakar and Bhatta.

According to Mimamsa, action is regarded as uppermost. It is regarded as the cause of misery or prosperity in life, bondage or salvation of the soul. Mm. Mishra has discussed the nature of action in several papers. The first of them was published as "*Law of Karman in the Vedic Samhitas*". Here he has traced the origin of the theory of Action in Mimamsa system in the Vedas. He has taken up nearly the same aspects in Hindi in a paper entitled "Rigveda mein Karma Vichara" (Theory of Action in Rig Veda) which was published in *Srikrishna Singh Felicitation Volume* from Monghyr.

He further critically edited quite a few works of this system. The first to be mentioned is *Ekadashadyadhikarana* which was published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona. Perhaps this is the only work of Murari Mishra that is extant. Mm. Mishra wrote the paper on "Murarestritiyah Panthah" on the basis of this work. The second Mimamsa work edited by him was Halayudha's "Mimamsasastra–sarvasva" which was published by the Bihar and Orissa Research Society in 1934. The third one was Parthasarathi Mishra's "Tantraratna " (Part 1) which he had edited along with Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha for the Saraswati Bhawan Text Series of Varanasi in 1930.

On this System he prepared two bibliographies also. the first was *Critical Bibliography of Mimamsa* which he named as *Kusumanjali* and appended to the English translation of *Shabara Bhashya* by Mm. Sir Ganganath Jha. He also prepared the Index of this translation which was published in Gaekwad Oriental Series of Baroda.

Nyaya system

The only full-fledged work on the Nyaya System which Mm. Mishra wrote was in Hindi called *Bharatiya Tarkashastra*

Ki Rooparekha (An Outline of Indian Logic). It was published by Ram Narain Lal of Allahabad. It was meant for the general reader and had no pretensions to be original research.

On Logic two papers of Mm. Mishra are available. The first is "Smriti Theory according to Nyaya Vaisesika" which was published from Poona in *K. B. Pathak Commemoration Volume* in 1930. He has discussed here cognition from memory and its process of working. The second paper is on "Mahamahopadhya Candra and His Views." It was published from Allahabad in the Ganganatha Jha Commemoration Volume in 1942. This described an obscure Nyaya scholar of Mithila and analysed the importance of many of his views.[1]

Mm. Mishra critically edited five books of Nyaya. The first was on Mahadeva's *Nyayakaustubha* which was unknown earlier. It was published in the Saraswati Bhawan Text Series of Varanasi in 1930. The second was Shankar Mishra's *Bhedaratna*. It was also unknown earlier. This work demolishes Shankar's Advaitavada and seeks to establish Dvaitavada from the viewpoint of Nyaya. It was published in the Oriental Series from Poona in 1942. The fourth work was perhaps the most difficult and important work of Navya Nyaya (Neo-Logic)—Gangeshopadhyaya's Tattvachintamani along with Mm. Pakshadhar Mishra's commentary *Aloka* and its commentary *Darpana* by Mm. Mahesha Thakkura. It was published by the Mithila Sanskrit Institute, Darbhanga in 1957. The fifth work was Mm. Candra's *Nyayaratnakara* but perhaps it is still unpublished: the paper on him mentioned earlier gives its main contents.

Vedanta System

Mm. Mishra did not write any independent work on Vedanta. But there are five extant papers on it. First, the

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1. Here the original author has mentioned a third work Nyaya System to Mahamahopadhya. It is however not a paper on *Tarka* but on *Tarksasutra* (The Aphorism of Carpentary) which was published in *B. C. Law Commemoration Volume* from Poona in 1946.

"Dream Theory in Indian Thought" was published in the Allahabad University magazine. The second, "Bhaskar School of Vedanta" was also published in the same journal. The third, "Background of Badarayanasutra" was published in the Vedanta number of *Kalyan-Kalpataru* of Gorakhpur. The fourth "Jiva: Its Movement and Uplift" was published in the *Journal of Baroda Oriental Institute.* It seeks to discuss lucidly the entire progress of the individual soul up to salvation. The fifth paper *Annihilation of Karman as the Cause of Moksa according to Padmapadacharya* was presented to the All India Oriental Conference in 1933 and published in its proceedings. It describes the annihilation of man's action and the final attainment of salvation according to Shankara's most intimate disciple Padmapadacharya.

The full-length Vedanta works compiled and edited by Mm. Mishra are more important. He compiled a *Dictionary of Vedanta* for the Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute of Poona but it could not be completed and published.

His edited works in Vedanta are two : (i) Padmapadacharya's *Vijnana Dipika.* This work was published along with the author's commentary: *Svopajna.* It consists of seventy-one Karikas on the lines of Ishwarkrishan's *Sankhyakarika* and may be called *Saptatika.*The paper on Padmapacharya which is mentioned above is a summary and analysis of this work. We should recall that it was this very author who wrote a commentary called *Paneapadika* on *Brahmasutra Bhashya* of Sankara. The other work was *Atmabodha* of Govinda Bhavatpadacharya[1], but it has not yet been published.

On the Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads there are two works. First, *A Critical Study of Bhagavadgita* which was published by Tirabhukti Publications of Allahabad. The other was *Chhandogya Upanishad.*

It may be mentioned at the end that his work on *Nimbarka school of Vedanta* was published by the University of Allahabad in 1942 as its Sanskrit series.

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1. It was an English translation of the work by some other scholar which Mm. Mishra was asked to review and edit but he could not complete it.

Other Systems

Mm. Mishra was not interested in Bauddha, Jain or Charvaka philosophies. This may be due to his staunch orthodox mentality. Nevertheless in his all-pervasive survey of all the systems in India he has touched upon each of them, and a paper on the Baudha system and another on Charvaka were written by him carefully. About Buddhism he wrote another paper on the "Downfall of Buddhism in India". This paper was published both in the *P.K. Gode Commemoration Volume* as well as in the *Journal of Ganganatha Jha Research Institute.* About the Charvaka system he wrote a paper called "Indian Materialism" which was published in *Twentieth Century* of Allahabad in 1937.

All Systems

Mm. Mishra also wrote a number of works on all the Systems taken together. Of all his works the *History of Indian Philosophy* is his magnum opus. Another identical work is in Hindi called *Bharatiya Darshan* which the Govt. of Uttar Pradesh published in 1960 through its Hindi Samiti. This discusses on an advanced level the main tenets and broad lines of development of all the Indian philosophical systems. Of course, it is less detailed than the English work but it has the additional merit of being completed during his life time.

The more thoughtful and advanced paper on all the systems taken together was "Synthetic Gradation in Indian Thought" published in the *Allahabad University Studies.* This essay seeks to explain the same viewpoint as was indicated briefly by Mm. Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha in his small Maithili book on Vedanta and explained by Mm. Mishra in his *History of Indian Philosophy.* His presidential speech at the All India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan at Meerut as in "Bhartiya Darshan Ki Rooprekha" and the paper contributed to Vikrama Memorial Volume published from Gwalior as "Bharatiya Darshano Ka Swarup-Nirupan" were similar analyses.

From the above account it is amply clear that Mm. Mishra devoted all his life to the study and research into Indian

Philosophy, and that in the course of its pursuit whatever he was able to achieve is highly beneficial to the students of Indian Philosophy as well as to the general student of Indology.

Other Disciplines

Mm. Mishra's interest in other branches of knowledge was equally strong. He collected a large number of rare valuable manuscripts in the Ganganath Jha Research Institute and compiled a descriptive catalogue of them in two parts. This may be taken as the third bibliographical work of Mm. Mishra. The science of bibliography was then fast growing into a developed science, and interestingly it was noted that Mm. Mishra was a distinguished bibliograp her too.

On the science of Dharmashashtra (Laws of Conduct) he edited three books. Mm. Dr Sir Ganganatha Jha had taken immense pains to restore the text of Medhatithi's celebrated commentary on *Manusmriti*. Mm. Mishra edited its second volume which was published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal at Calcutta in 1939. Similarly, he edited Dr Ganganath Jha's translation of Vachaspati Mishra's *Vivadacintamani* which was published in the Gaekwad Oriental Series from Baroda in 1942. His third work on Dharmashastra was a critical edition of *Harinathopadhyaya's Smritisarasangraha* for the Gaekwad Oriental Series of Baroda, but it is still unpublished.

On grammar, he edited three works of his father— (i) *Shastrartharatnavali*, (ii) Commentary called *Vijaya* on Nagesh Bhatta's *Paribhashendushekhar*, and (iii) the commentary called *Jaya* on Gadadhar Bhatt's Vyutpattivad. All these works have been popular throughout India. He corrected the proofs of the fouth edition of the second book even during the last days of his life.

On Literature, three or four of his short papers are available, for instance, (i) "Bhavabhuti" in *Mithila Mihir* of Darbhanga in 1922; (ii) "Kalidasa's Supremacy" *in Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaya Felicitation Volume;* (iii) "Kavi aur Kavya" (Poet and Poetry) in *Hindustani* of Allahabad; (iv) "Dushyanta ka eka Anshika Charitra" (A Partial Portrait of Dushyanta)

in the Kalidas Number of Kishore of Patna; (v) "Govardhanacharya aur unki saptashati" (Govardhnacarya and his Anthology Saptashati) published in *Vaishali* of Muzaffarpur. He edited only one work of literature —the anthology of Vidyakara Mishra called *Vidyakara Sahasrakam* (belonging to the beginning of the nineteenth century) which contains 1000 independent verses in Sanskrit. In its introduction he has discussed the life and works of a large number of obscure and little known poets. It was published by the Allahabad University in 1942.

On paleography he wrote a *A Brief Note on the Kandaha Inscription* of King Narasimhadeva of Mithila (1435 A.D.) This was published in Allahabad University Studies Volume XII.

As the local secretary of the XIV session of the All India Oriental Conference held at Darbhanga in 1948 he edited three or four volumes describing the proceedings and the summaries of papers and presidential addresses.

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VIII

As Sir Ganganath Jha's Disciple

We have seen earlier how Mm. Mishra's father Mahamahopadhyaya Jayadeva Mishra came to know Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha even in his childhood days and how in later years both became master and disciple and developed an intimate family relationship. This intimacy proved to be the governing of Mm. Mishra life.

During his childhood days Mm. Mishra hardly got opportunity to come into direct contact with Sir Ganganath Jha; it is however very strange. For, after his mother died Mm. Mishra came to Darbhanga around 1902 when Sir Ganganath left Darbhanga to join Muir Central College at Allahabad. Next year, the Mishras reached Varanasi. Therefore Mm. Mishra's regular companionship with Sir Ganganath must have started in 1918 when he came from Allahabad to Varanasi as Principal of the Government Sanskrit College. And it was another strange coincidence that in 1916 Mm. Mishra had switched over to the Central Hindu College from Government Sanskrit College. That is how he could never be a student of Sir Ganganath Jha. Mm. Mishra made Pandit Gopinath Kaviraj as his teacher. A photograph of Mm. is extant which shows exactly how Sir Ganganath Jha was seated with Mm Jayadeva Mishra as his disciple. Still, the two always met formally. There was such exceptional personal intimacy between the two families that Mm. Mishra must have visited Sir Ganganath Jha frequently and obtained guidance in his studies. However, while attending his classes at the university and preparing for the university examinations he might have had no opportunity to be taught by Sir Ganganath Jha. And as luck would have it, even later as soon as he passed the M.A. examination, Dr Jha had shifted to Allahabad University as its Vice-Chancellor.

Fortunately in 1923, Mm. Mishra was appointed a lecturer in Sanskrit in the same university, and as long as Dr Jha was alive, Mm. Mishra assisted Dr Jha in all his academic pursuits, and following his footprints obtained the ennobled title of Mahamahopadhyaya and the position of a Vice-Chancellor.

As soon as he became a lecturer, Mm. Mishra engaged himself in research for the D. Lit. degree. The topic of his research was such as Sir Ganganath Jha could be helpful at every step, for he had by then made himself thoroughly familiar with every branch of Indian philosophy. When the doctoral thesis of Mm. Mishra was published, it was in the fitness of the thesis that Sir Ganganath should write its Foreword. In the Foreword he declared Mm. Mishra as a "highly gifted intellectual". In whatsoever literary endeavour Mm. Mishra engaged himself, the guidance of Dr Sir Ganganath was readily available. In Dr Ganganath Jha's household Mm. Mishra enjoyed the same affection and facilities of a younger brother of Dr Amarnath Jha. On his part Mm. Mishra returned this attachment of the family by devotedly attending to its academic and social needs like a kinsman. In those days expression of gratitude by a disciple for the assistance of his preceptor was considered neither decent nor befitting for the prestige of the preceptor. These days it is not infrequent to see people offering in their prefaces thanks even to their own illiterate wives for helping them with tea or other drinks while they write something. An acknowledgement of such gratefulness was considered ridiculous then. Hence, such acknowledgement of assistance rendered by Mm. Mishra will not be found. However, given here are the details of it gathered from reliable sources.

It seems, Sir Ganganath completed the translation of Parthasarathi Mishra's work on Mimamsa called *Tantraratna* around 1927–28, as it was published in 1930 in the series of Saraswati Bhawan of Varanasi. Mm. Mishra had assisted him in its editing. This establishes the fact that Mm. Mishra began to work with Sir Ganganath from 1927 or sometime before it. It was then Mm. Mishra collaborated with him in the editing of Mm. Shankara Mishra's *Bhedaratna* as well as the

second volume of the commentary of *Manusmriti* which was published by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.

From about 1936–37 Dr Jha's health started declining. It appears that Mm. Mishra embarked upon himself the entire task of assiduous editing and supervising every publication of Sir Ganganath. Gradually almost all the works of Sir Ganganath which were published after his death were virtually edited by him. Thus, it is worth recording that the translation of *Chhandagya Upanishad* into English for Poona Oriental Series which was published in 1942; Vachaspati Mishra's *Vivadachintamani;* and *Mimamsa-Kusumanjali* were the fruit of the collaboration of both Mm. Mishra and Sir Ganganath.

There is a great deal of similarity between the lives and works of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha and Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra. Largely this was due to the fact that both were working in the same field of activity, but still some aspects were unique and exceptional. Mm. Mishra's father Mm. Jayadeva Mishra had carefully watched the career of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha since his very childhood. Possibly, his lifestyle, which was a wonderful combination of the traditional and the modern ways of living, greatly appealed to him, and he took a decision to make this as the ideal lifestyle for his son. Throughout their lives both were attached to the courts of Gandhvari and Darbhanga and enjoyed life-long respect from the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Both were educated on modern lines at school and college but continued to study at home in the traditional manner. Both made Sanskrit literature and Indian philosophy their subjects for specialized studies. Both lived at Darbhanga, Varanasi and Allahabad all their lives. Both were fond of Maithil dress and Maithil customs and moral codes of conduct. Both had acquired D.Lit in Indian philosophy. On both of them the highest title of Mahamahopadhyaya was conferred. Both began their services in the University of Allahabad and reached superannuation there. Both became Vice-Chancellors. Both devoted their lives to the study and research and writing Indian philosophy as main subject and other disciplines as subsidiary subjects. Both kept themselves busy in reforming and experimenting Sanskrit education especially

of the traditional type. Both had immense faith in the greatness of Sanskrit pandits. Both were exceptionally devoted to and anxious to promote the cause of their mother tongue, Maithili. Both were staunchly orthodox in beliefs. Both built houses at Allahabad. Sir Ganganath called it *Mithila* and Mm. Mishra called it *Tirabhukti*, and both inscribed their names on their gates in Mithilakshara. Both had the good fortune of having several capable sons. Mm. Mishra had six sons and Sir Ganganath five—all intellectuals and all holding positions of eminence The sons of both Dr Jha and Mm. Mishra—Dr Amaranatha Jha and Dr Jayakanta Mishra—occupied the chair of Professor at Allahabad University. On reading the *Autobiographical Notes of Dr Ganganath Jha* one is able to find several more similarities between the two.

There it was natural that on Dr Ganganath's demise the pandits and the enlightened intellectuals of Mithila looked to Mm. Mishra with the same trust and respect centering their hopes on Mm. Mishra. Happily, he devoted the last half of his life in making efforts to fulfill their hopes and aspirations. This is evident from the establishment of Mithila Sanskrit Institute. Darbhanga, the Darbhanga Session of All India Oriental Conference, and lastly the opening of the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University.

IX

Advent of a New Age in Sanskrit Education

When the British rulers in India began to determine an Educational Policy, a far-reaching controversy was aired if the education of western sciences and technology should be imparted through the medium of English on modern lines or through the traditional Indian system of education imparted through Sanskrit. In this controversy the advocates of modern education won and consequently modern education was introduced vigorously on a wide scale. Simultaneously it was decided that the traditional Indian system of education should also be preserved. Since then, the government began to work out a plan for the promotion of Sanskrit education and took steps to execute it.

In 1911 a member for education in the Government of India Mr. Butler, convened a conference of Indologists at Simla. There Dr Thibaut, Dr Venice, Sir Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, Harprasad Shastri, Dr Woolner, Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha and other eminent indologists were present. It was decided at this conference to develop the traditional teaching and studying of Sanskrit learning in a special way. Along with sufficient grants this decision was conveyed to the Provincial Governments. Accordingly the Government of Bihar constituted a representative committee to consider the promotion of Sanskrit education and the establishment of a modern university at Patna. The chairman of this committee was Rover Nathan, and among the members wer Dr Thibaut and Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha. They met several times and succeeded in preparing a comprehensive plan. The resolution on Sanskrit education was approved and the Bihar

Sanskrit Association came into existence so that it could work as a university on a small scale. It took up to commence three duties : recognition of Sanskrit *pathashalas* (schools), the disbursement of teachers' salaries and students scholarships and holding of examinations. As a result, there was for sometime unprecedented rise in the number of Sanskrit students. However, no sooner than the facilities for modern system of education became available, the number of Sanskrit students declined and the bright students became rare, for the simple reason that modern education was remunerative To meet this situation, the Government of Bihar constituted a Sanskrit Education Reorganization Board. At one of its meetings it was resolved that the traditional system of education should be combined with modern system of education so that even Sanskrit students could be absorbed in the services. For introducing such a system of education the question of establishing a Sanskrit University was mooted but financial constraints stood in the way of its implementaion.

In 1938 the University Commission meant for the reorganisation of University education also recommended the establishment of a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga.

Thus, for a long time mere discussions went on for improving Sanskrit education. In 1943 the Government of Bihar appointed Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra a member of the committee for reorganization of Sanskrit education. Since then he became alive to this problem. He felt that the government was hesitating just on account of financial consideration. Mm began to search for a suitable donor. That year the XII Session of the All India Oriental Conference was held at Varanasi. Mm. Mishra was presiding over its Religion and Philosophy section. Fortunately Maharajadhiraj Sir Kameshwar Singh Bahadur of Darbhanga was also present in the conference. He had great regard for the Mahamahopadhyaya. Finding an opportune moment he quietly proposed to the Maharajadhiraj to hold the next session of the Conference at Darbhanga so that he could attract his attention towards the problem of Sanskrit education. The Maharaja approved the proposal. Meanwhile, however, the Conference had already decided to hold the next

session at Nagpur in 1946—there also Mm. Mishra was called upon to chair the Philosophy and Religion section. At this session the Maharajadhiraj's invitation was accepted.

The year 1948 will be recorded in the history of Darbhanga in golden letters when the XIV Session of the All India Oriental Conference was held with an unprecedented success. The Maharajadhiraja Sir Kameshwar Singh spent his money liberally. Dr Amarnath Jha was the Chairman of the reception committee. Mm. Mishra was appointed the local secretary. The presence of topmost erudite Indologists from all parts of India created a unique atmosphere at Darbhanga. For days together Mm. Mishra had to forego his meals and spend sleepless night so as to make the session a historic event. His indefatigable efforts filled everyone's heart with admiration for him. Despite hundreds of assistants it was he who seemed to be personally present himself everywhere. The success of the conference was beyond description. The Maharaja was highly impressed and was all praise for his extraordinary competence, adroitness and command over every detail. Mm Mishra found his way to success at this.

Actually the Maharajadhiraj himself was a great patron of Sanskrit education and Indology, and had been long thinking of doing something concrete in this regard. He had discussed the problem in detail with Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha, Dr Harichand Shastri (whom, on his retirement, he had respectfully appointed as tutor for his nephew Rajkumar Jiveshwar Singh) and the court pandit Baldev Mishra. He constituted a committee to establish an Institution to fulfil his dreams, which included Dr Harichand Shastri, Sir Ganganath Jha and Kumar Ganganand Sinha as members. The committee recommended that in order to preserve the traditional scholarship a *vidyapeeth* (research institute) be founded where erudite experts of traditional learning should be appointed and attractive scholarships be offered to the students so that their tradition continues for posterity. For some peculiar reasons, before this scheme could be implemented the two scholarly members of the committee expired. In Mm. Mishra he saw a scholar whom he could fall back up on. It was Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha who had actually thought of a similar experiment when he was the Principal of

Government Sanskrit College at Varanasi by starting 'Post-Archarya' classes. Mm. Mishra, eager to follow on the footsteps of Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha, was ready to implement now. At an opportune moment he proposed it to the Maharaja who readily gave his consent to it. It was decided that the Maharaja should donate land and building at Darbhanga itself for the proposed Sanskrit Institute of the Bihar Government.

The government on its part accepted the Maharaja's donation. Consequently, just a year later in 1949 in a corner of Darbhanga appropriately named as Mahesh Nagar, came into existence the Mithila Institute of Research and Post-graduate Studies in Sanskrit learning. Mm. Dr Umesha Mishra was appointed its first director.

It is well-known that the house of Darbhanga Raj was founded by the Maharaja Kameshwar Singh's ancestor Maharaj Mahesh Thakur on the basis of scholarship. That is why the premises of the new institute were named Mahesh Nagar. In those days there was a minister in Bihar government whose name Mahesh Singh was mistaken as the source of this Mahesh Nagar ! The then chief minister Sri Krishna Singh was not very happy with Mahesh Singh.

A member of Shri Krishan Singh group therefore questioned why the name of the gentleman was proposed to be associated with this Institute. When the reply to his question was given the Assembly Hall resounded with an uproarious laughter !

The chief reason why Maharajadhiraj's was so attached to Sanskrit learning was that his estate was acquired through proficiency in Sanskrit learning.

There was one other reason why Mm. Mishra was appointed the first director of the Institute. In 1941 Dr Sir Ganganath Jha expired. Immediately after his death Mm. Mishra took steps to found a suitable memorial to him. His efforts were successful because Sir Ganganath had a very high reputation in Uttar Pradesh. The Ganganath Jha Research Institute was established in 1943 and Mm. Mishra was elected its honorary secretary. His firm determination, hard work and profound learning were soon able to make it famous throughout India and abroad, and its quarterly

Research Journal came to be regarded as a remarkable acquisition to the world of Oriental studies. The Maharajadhiraj knew that he had established an Institute and was running it successfully. Where could he get another such an experienced hand as director ?

Since this Institute had been handed over to the government of Bihar, it could not be run exactly as a centre of purely traditional learning which Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath and Dr Harichand Shastri had planned. Instead the teachers with modern degrees of M.A. and Ph. D. became more important here and a number of aged learned traditional scholars such as Mahavaiyakarana Dinabandhu Jha (great Grammarian), Naiyayikapravar Shasinath Jha (leading scholar of Logic), Jyotishi Dayanath Jha (Astronomer), etc. were attached to it as subsidiaries. Postgraduate teaching and Research were introduced. Editing and publishing old manuscripts also were taken up. Its curriculum was in many ways unique and unconventional, but in the interest of making its degrees recognised, it was affiliated to the University of Bihar in so far as its examinations were concerned. Classes were held in the traditional way in morning hours—Mm. Mishra insisted on this speciality, and as long as he was there the classes were always held only in the morning. Until regular teachers were appointed, Mm. Mishra himself used to take the classes. In the afternoon the students were expected to study with the traditional pandits at their residences or just consult them for clarifying doubts and solving difficulties. Traditional pandits did not hold classes but it was compulsory for them to have done some kind of original written work.

Personally Mm. Mishra toiled all the day. In the forenoon he used to do teaching and in the afternoon he would attend to the work in the office and, again, in the evening he would take rounds of the hostel to meet the traditional pandits at their residences inquiring after their problems, if any, or discussing with them some scholarly points.

Thus working hard, Mm. Mishra solved all the problems of its inception for four years and made its running smooth but as soon as he had completed his term of directorship in 1952 he returned to join his old post at Allahabad University.

The Mithila Institute in those days acted as a refuge foı large number of dejected and helpless but intelligent Sanskrit students who had studied in the traditional discipline. Many students who had passed Shastri on Acharya examinations, obtained the degrees of M.A. and even Ph. D. and were appointed lecturers, readers and professors,and it seems that the sinking boat of Sanskrit education was given a timely helping hand. Some twenty-five or thirty years ago the University of Lahore had similarly introduced the degree of M. O. L. and Shastri for the traditional scholars under the aegis of Dr Woolner who had done a yeomen's service to them. Similarly Mm. Mishra through this Institute came to their rescue in the state of Bihar.

Nevertheless all this could only partially fulfil Mm. Mishra's aspiration of resuscitating the prestige and utility of traditional learning. He kept to his innermost heart the ambition of founding a Sanskrit University. He was on the look out for a proper oppotunity to be able to put his dream into reality.

Meanwhile when he went back to his old post at the University of Allahabad, he once again engaged himself in writing original books and publishing them. In 1957 the first volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy* was published. Simultaneously *A Critical Study of Bhagwatgita, Bharatiya Darshan* and*Maithil Sanskriti O Sabhyata* were also published. But all the while secretly he continued to make efforts to establish a Sanskrit University.

The story of a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga is pretty old. It was discussed even before Mm. Mishra was born. Several foreign Orientalists had expressed their view that three places were suitable for establishing a Sanskrit University—Varanasi, Mithila and Nadiya-Shantipur. Since then the question was discussed periodically, again and again. In 1938 a committee for the reorganisation of Sanskrit education was formed. It recommended that the Sanskrit University should be established at Darbhanga in the heart of Mithila. But the government turned down the recommendation owing to financial stringency. Instead, it took up for consideration the establishment of a Sanskrit Research Institute. The same year a University Commission was

constituted which also reiterated the recommendation for establishing a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga. When the nation became free from foreign rule the government of India constituted a Sanskrit Education commission under the Chairmanship of Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji in 1955. It also made a similar recommendation. It will thus be seen that the idea of establishing a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga had been launched before the government in 1900 and continued till 1955.

Meanwhile some intellectuals realised the need of opening a general college of higher learning at Darbhanga. A delegation of distinguished citizens made a request for financial help to the Maharajadhiraj. At heart the Maharajadhiraj was in favour of promoting Technical Education and felt that the general modern education was not in the interest of the nation, it would multiply meaninglessly the number of educated unemployed. Consequently, a scion of the Maharaja, Babu Chandradhari Sinha made a donation for the opening of a college called Chandradhari Mithila College. In this deal the Maharaja's prestige suffered a loss, for which he always carried a grudge.

Again, during these years Pandit Gangadhar Mishra, Pandit Harinath Mishra, Prof. Parmakant Choudhary, Prof. Tantranath Jha, Prof. Srikrishna Mishra and other elites in Darbhanga became active. This time also they approached the Maharajadhiraj for assistance. He replied : "What is the use of a general University ? For that matter there are several other universities, if you want me to establish a Sanskrit university, I shall be glad to give it due consideration." But it was the need of a general university that caught the eye of the people,and to that end under the leadership of Pandit Harinath Mishra and Dr Lakshman Jha efforts were being made. the ambition of the Maharaja to found a Sanskrit University remained a dream.

Sometime around 1960 the Maharaja rang up the palace officer Sri Harishchandra Mishra to make the Anandbagh Palace in a tip-top condition forthwith The

reason was not divulged. Even the private secretary of the Maharaja Pandit Girindra Mohan Mishra, was kept in the dark. On the third day after the instruction the northern gate of the Anand bagh Palace, which would usually remain closed, was kept open. Exactly at 10 a.m. the Maharaja received there from the northern gate almost dramatically the Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Chief Minister of Bihar Sri Krishna Singh and Education Minister of Bihar Kumar Ganganand Sinha. The Maharaja took them round the entire palace. Pandit Nehru, of course, immediately left with his associates to address a public meeting at Laheriaserai. Several days later people came to know that the Maharajadhiraj desired to offer this palace to the government for establishing a Sanskrit University. Nobody knew how all this came about—the negotiations for this offer were carried on in such reserved manner that the details of the entire story are not known to many even today. It is possible that the protagonists of this offer, who were in the background, were Mm. Mishra, Kumar Ganganand Sinha and Rajpandit Baldeva Mishra. Eventually on one fine morning the Sanskrit University came into existence.

It was the 30th of March, 1960. At an open air function in the compound of the Anandbagh Palace (also known as Lakshmishwar Vilas Palace) amidst an impressive ceremony Maharajadhiraj Sir Kameshwar Singh Bahadur made a gift of the royal palace to the Governor of Bihar for the establishment of a Sanskrit University. Besides the rich library of the Maharajadhiraj and the land around it were also dedicated to the cause of the language of the gods of Hinduism. Later the government made appropriate statutes and passed an Act for the regular establishment of a Sanskrit University. Both the government and the Maharajadhiraj gave their consents to the appointment of Mm. Dr Umesh Mishra as its first Vice-Chancellor. On the Republic Day (26th January) of 1961 this University started to function in the midst of scenes of jubilation: thus the dream of the Orientalists for the last fifty to fifty-five years came to be a reality, as also the ambition of Mm. Mishra was fulfilled

Mm Mishra now set out vigorously to resuscitate Sanskrit studies with renewed enthusiasm. In the first place he tried to set into order the examinations with an iron hand. Who does not know now how difficult it is to do so ? The centres of Shastri (undergraduate) and Acharya (postgraduate) examinations which were spread over widely in all directions were centralized in the University building. During the examination hours he used to be present himself all the time wielding a big stick. No student or teacher could dare make use of any unfair means to pass the examinations. Under these conditions it was obvious that the number of successful examinees fell down but on the whole matters improved. Those teachers and students who were used to idling and getting success at the examinations by hook or by crook, were nabbed. The students began to devote themselves to studies, and the teachers to meet their classes assiduously and only after doing proper homework. The atmosphere of the whole of Mithila region became studious.

As the Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning was under the direct control of the Government, there the pace of Mm. Mishra's earnestness often met with an obstruction from the inefficiency or indifference of the official machinery. This situation made him sad quite often. But here at the University there was not such a difficulty. The minister for education was Kumar Ganganand Sinha who was a scion of the royal family of Banaili which had long reputation for its patronage of learning. Moreover, he had been, for a number of years, the private secretary of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. He was well-versed in Maithili and Sanskrit literature and had an unbounded love for them. It was, therefore, natural that Mm. Mishra had no difficulty in getting funds for the University. Of course, he had to face all the problems which any new institution has to face in the beginning. And these problems he was able to solve successfuly. Thus the foundations of the Sanskrit University were well and truly laid deep.

He had, however, a most unpleasant experience of confrontation from an individual at the University. It would not

be fair to name him. Even before the University was founded, that gentleman happened to be Deputy Director (Sanskrit) in the education department of the government and by virtue of his post acted as secretary of the Bihar Sanskrit Association. In those days all the Sanskrit schools and colleges were under the Association, and since the Association did not function properly—it was existing only on paper. Reality was they were under thumb of the above officer. On the institution of the University the administrative control of all the recognized Sanskrit schools and colleges passed on to the University. That was done, but the right to sanction grants-in-aid was not surrendered to it for a long time. The said gentleman colluded with a section of pandits to see that the right of sanctioning grant-in-aid remained intact with him. On noticing the devotion of those pandits to the officer Mm. Mishra asked one of the pandits, "Why do you dance attendance upon the above mentioned officer ?" The pandit blurted out rather bluntly, "Sir, after all the money is distributed by him. Hence why should we not dance attendance upon him ? Please get the right to grant aid to us, then the pandits will themselves be your devotees." Mm. Mishra smiled and patting him on his back said, "Well, you have verily taught me a lesson ! You have opened my eyes !"

He thereafter went all out for acquiring the right to award grants-in-aid to the Sanskrit institutions and was crowned with success. Mm. Mishra had the patience to listen to truth even if they were unpleasant, the present anecdote is a proof of this. Since then the said pandit became a follower of the Mahamahopadhyaya. Thus by the end of his term as Vice-Chancellor he placed the University on a firm footing and retired in February 1964. He made no efforts to continue for the second term.

It is evident from the facts of his life that Mm. Mishra used to found institutions but never tried to turn it into his personal acquisition. Never did he display any such evil tendency. He was the founder of several institutions—such as, Ganganath Jha Research Institute, Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning, Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, All India Maithili Sahitya Samiti and so on, but

never he went about collecting funds for any of them. He made plans and directly handed it over to the government or found out a suitable donor and then got it approved by the government.

As long as the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University will live, he will be remembered for his creation of a studious atmosphere, initiation of a clean administration, spirited energy, hard work and infinite love for Sanskrit language and the learning.

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X

In the Cool Evening of Life

By the time Mm. Mishra retired as Vice-Chancellor of the Kameshwarsingh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, he had nearly attained the age of seventy. It was time when his body as well as spirits needed rest. But one who was all his life active, could not enjoy it by being inactive. In the cool evening of life for a person like him rest could come by devoting himself to religion and knowledge. Now that he was free from all obligations he engaged himself in the publication of his *magnum opus, History of Indian Philosophy* (Vol. II), which was printed two years later in 1966. He started working for the third volume of this work and nearly completed its writing and preparing the press copy. Till the last day of his life he was busy correcting its proofs. This is the story of his pursuit of knowledge.

Religion and virtuous conduct had formed the keynotes of his life. Two of his fears were his father and the fear that by being educated through the medium of English he would lose interest in religion and traditional Hindu manners. But it was a baseless fear, exactly as in the case of Mm. Ganganath Jha. Repeating Gayatri a thousand times, worship of Panchadevata, offering Sandhyavandan three times a day, etc. according to the injunctions of the Scriptures which he began in early childhood continued to be his daily routine undisturbed till the end of his life. On crossing the age of sixty, he devoted more time to the performance of these routine or ceremonious rituals Indeed in his last years he took only *Ganga-jal* (water of Ganga) in place of water.

In carrying out these religious practices he often faced a lot of inconvenience, particularly when away from home or on a journey. People purchase a car to enjoy the luxury of it. He also purchased it, not for comfort and pleasure so much as for being able to visit the *Triveni* daily !

Every bird remembers its nest at dusk. Similarly Mm. Mishra felt nostalgia for his village home, the playground of his childhood. Of course, he had never completely forgotten it—his village was 20 miles away from the nearest railway station but he never grudged to cover the distance on foot. At least once a year he would visit it despite the difficulties involved in doing so. His father expired in 1926. Since then the property of his family had been partitioned and even the village residence had been divided. He constructed a house for himself in 1934 and five years later another at Allahabad. His father had got dug a tank and performed a full-fledged ceremonial sacrificial rite over it with Mm. Parameshwar Jha as the priest. A large number of eminent pandits of the region had attended it. Mm. Mishra seemed to have remembered those scenes. It was therefore natural for him that on retirement from Vice-Chancellorship in 1964 he got a tank dug at Gajahare. Two years later in 1966 he built a temple of Shiva on the embankment of his father's tank. There he raised in that temple two Shiva idols, one in the memory of his father called Jayadeveshvara and another in that of his mother called Sugeshvara. In the last year of his life on 16th May, 1967 he organized a recital of the 18 Puranas in his village. It was a grand religious ceremony. It was the last glorious act of his life, for during its performance he suffered a paralytic stroke. From there he came back to Allahabad and some four months later on 9th September, 1967 at the age of seventy-two quietly, he passed away. There is a saying in Maithili : "Karani dekhabah marni beri" (The quality of one's deeds in life is seen at the time of leaving it. In other words, the virtuous have an easy death. Certainly Mm. Mishra was a noble soul in his past life, as and so was in his present.

There were no ambitions in his life that were not fulfilled. All his six sons are occupying high positions. All his life he enjoyed sound health, and kept on winning honours. What else could one desire in life ? Yes, his mother tongue Maithili and his adored scholastic pursuit could not progress as desired by him and his soul in the other world might be in pain for that reason ! It is for his successors to relieve his suffering ! !

XI

Unique Personal Characteristics

His greatest gift was to understand the value of time. He would not waste a moment in life. In the lexicon *Amarakosha* "keeping musical time" is explained strangely enough as "something connecting the beats with the passage of time". As in music not a single beat can be ignored so Mm. Mishra did not waste a single moment of his daily life. He was literally bound by his daily routine. Usually great men fix a daily routine during their adolescence and they effortlessly stick to it till the end of their life.

In a fixed daily routine two points have to be observed—one, sleep should be allotted the minimum time and one's hours of work the maximum; secondly, punctuality in daily activities. The habit of being firm on his daily habits that Mm Mishra was made to acquire, right from his childhood, more or less continued uninterruptedly till the end of his life.

His daily routine around 1944 may be seen. He used to get up early in the morning at four-thirty and take bath early either at the Ganges (Triveni) or at his home. By seven he would be ready for offering his prayers and telling his beads. After a light breakfast he would sit in his study—there he would prepare his lectures as well as carry on his self-studies. Between eleven and two in the day he would take his classes at the university.Then he would have his meals and a siesta till about three in the afternoon. By three he would again be in his study–reading or writing. By five-thirty he would go to the Ganganath Jha Research Institute and work there till about seven. Back home he would offer his evening prayers and once again in his study he would be absorbed, reading and writing. Between the hours he would receive visitors and students. At nine he would dine with all male members of the family seated in row. After his dinner by ten he would go to bed.

This daily routine had become a habit with him as early as 1923 when he joined the University of Allahabad as a lecturer, with the difference that as long as Mm. Dr Sir Ganganath Jha was alive he would see him in the evenings and work with him. This was virtually his routine all through his life, except when between 1949 and 1962 he was at the Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning at Darbhanga. There he finished his morning prayers etc. as early as seven instead of eight. From seven to eleven he would be either teaching or supervising others. From eleven to two he would work in his office. By two he would have his meals. Till four he would rest and from four to five he would again work in the office. At dusk he would offer his prayers. Theareafter he would spend sometime chatting. At seven he would go round the students' hostel and visit the pandits—inquiring after their health or discussing with them their scholastic pursuits and generally chatting. Finishing all this in a few minutes by seven-thirty he would again be in his study. At nine he would have his dinner and by ten he was in bed. From 1961 even when he was for three years Vice Chancellor of the Kameshwar Singh Darbhanga Sanskrit University, his daily routine was similar, save that in the morning instead of teaching he would be engaged in work connected with the University. From all this it is clear that Mm. Mishra attached importance to every minute of his life and utilized it. His devotion to work reminds the following verse in *Bhagavadgita* :

> One who eats and works regularly,
> Is engaged in timely action,
> Sleeps on time,
> His devotion to action leads to happiness.

His favourite dress was dhoti, close-fitting coat with the front collars fastened by buttons, and a Maithil *pag* (head dress made out of a turban of 60 hands). Sometimes he would wear a black round cap on his head On special ceremonial occasions at the university he would also wear a close-fitting coat with the front collars fastened by buttons and trousers. This only proves that unlike several other matters, he was liberal in his mode of dressing. In this matter also his ideal was Sir Ganganath Jha.

His food was simple but nutritive. He was a teetotaller, having never tasted any intoxicant of any kind—tea, coffee, betel leaf or tobacco. He used to have meals three times a day. In this matter he was a firm believer—he was very particular about what was fit to be eaten and what was contaminated. In the course of a journey where he would not get food pure enough to be acceptable by him, he would go without it or take fruits instead. On attaining the age of sixty he abandoned drinking ordinary water as a rule and drank Ganges water only in its place. This he meticulously observed till the end of his life.

A few incidents as under from his life would his personal traits :

At the time, when the right of awarding grants-in-aid to the Sanskrit schools was being transferred to the Sanskrit University, it so happened that the teachers could not get their salaries for a couple of months. One of the pandits wrote to Mm. Mishra that his examination remuneration be paid to help him meet the financial stringency. Mm. Mishra took no time to send him the examination remuneration through telegraphic money order.

Similarly, on onother occasion an employee of the Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning, Mahavaiyakarana Dinabandhu Jha had died. On learning the news of his demise, he withdrew money from the bank equal to the amount due to him on his own and saw that the entire sum was remitted to him at his home through a special messenger.

These petty incidents tell how by humane feelings alone he had full sway upon his office and its employees.

The most interesting of all is an incident that illustrates his religious parochialism. A religious Brahmin of Mithila regards eating meals wearing upper garments, particularly sewn ones, as highly objectionable. Howsoever bitter cold it might be even today such a religious brahmin takes off his upper garments and washes his hands and feet before sitting down for his meals. Today, however, the number of such persons is fast dwindling. But in those days when this incident took place very few people used to eat their meals with their upper (sewn) garments on. On one occasion of marriage or sacred thread ceremony at his in-law's place

Mm. Mishra was attending a feast He was the chief guest there. The invitees had been called to take their seats They washed their feet and occupied them. Just before the food was served, Mm. Mishra went round the rows of guests.' He spotted several young men seated wearing their upper garments on He could not help himself and made the announcement that those who were sitting wearing their upper garments should quit the feasting party. This announcement put the entire crowd in a state of flutter A few took off their upper garments, but a section of young men were adamant, that if food would not be served, they would go without food but refused to take off their upper garments Others were also excited by this humiliation. The situation was highly embarrassing. Eventually Mm Mishra's wife and mother-in-law intervened. They called Mm. Mishra outside and explained to him . "What are you up to ? You may have faith in some principles but if others have no faith in them why need you force them to follow yours ?" Mm. Mishra listened to all this patiently and replied gravely . "Well, what they do elsewhere does not bother me. But how can I bear such preposterous behaviour in my presence ?"

His wife was very sensible and practical. She quietly answered : "You are right, but then the best thing to do is to leave them for a while and let them do what they please in your absence."

Mm. Mishra was shocked. There was no way to meet the situation other than what his wife had advised him. He moved out of the place. The resentment of the guests cooled down and they ate to their fill and the Maithil parochial custom of not wearing sewn garments while eating also received a deadly blow.

Indeed despite several such occasions, this custom has not completely given up from the Maithili Brahman community and in many families it is still followed.

This incident illustrates that though he was so firm on his views and conservative in outlook, he would lose no time to bow down to a reasonable advice.

There was another incident almost similar to the above. It so happened at a marriage ceremony where Mm. was participating from the bride's side. The bridegroom had

arrived, he was carried by the ladies to the marriage altar in the courtyard. The bridegroom's party also arrived but Mm. Mishra saw that they did not have the Maithil headdress (*pag*) on their heads. According to Maithil custom they should wear the *pag* on their heads. The traditional idea of Hindu religion enjoins that after what is prescribed in the Vedas and in the Smritis, customs which are not evil or shameful are to be given equal regard. How could putting on the *pag* be regarded evil or shameful ? In every community and every region some form of formal headdress has always prevailed. Naturally, therefore, Mm. Mishra regarded the putting on of *pag* on such a ceremonial occasions as an article of faith with him. He used to quote the scriptural injunction *"acaraprabhavo dharmah"* (dharma or religion is born out of good customs). He, therefore, announced that those guests who had not put on the *pag* shall not get their feet washed which was a mark of welcome.

This time also there was a violent resentment. The bridegroom party took this announcement as sheer humiliation and got ready to walk out. The bride's father begged of them not to do so and sent a cyclist to the market for fetching *pags* for each one of them. The ready-made *pags* arrived and after each one of the bridegroom's party had put on one they were welcomed by washing their feet. In this incident Mm. Mishra emerged victorious and put the members of the bride-groom's party to shame.

There was another incident where Mm. Mishra remained firm to preserving the traditional way of living. He had his education at Varanasi. His father Mm. Jayadeva Mishra was also a teacher in the Darbanga Pathashala at Varanasi. In ancient India, the Vedas were taught in the morning. The scriptures prescribe it. The pandits of Varanasi have preserved the old tradition of holding classes in the morning. Mm. Mishra had seen this custom personally at Varanasi. When he joined as Director the Mithila Institute of Sanskrit Learning it was a bitter cold of January. Nevertheless, he prescribed that the classes be held in the morning, from fifteen minutes to seven. Several newly appointed teachers were late risers, and several students also were habituated to getting up late. A large number of students were poor. After

all it is mostly the poor students who take to Sanskrit education. They do not have sufficient warm clothes to cover them. They began attending their classes in the bitter cold with trembling body and twittering teeth. After a few days all of them, teachers and students, represented to the Director in a chorus that the teaching hours be changed. However, Mm. Mishra was adamant. He insisted that studies constituted an act of *dharma* (faith), and as such it was prescribed in the scriptures to be performed in the mornings. If the students were not prepared to bear that small act of hardship, how could they devote themselves to learn a difficult subject like Sanskrit ? The poor students pleaded their inability on account of their ill-clad bodies. Thereupon the Mahahopadhyaya became ready to give them his own wrappers which, however, the students did not accept out of decency. He was not prepared to allow any excuse as a reason for rescinding his decision. All efforts were unsuccessful and Mm. Mishra won the battle. As long as he was there, morning classes all the year round continued, but the day he relinquished the post of director the teachers and students became free from the inconvenient hours of the classes and the decision of teaching throughout the year in the morning hours came to an end, never to be revoked again.

Another such question arose regarding the weekly closure on Sundays. Mm. Mishra was requested that the weekly closure of the Institute on *Ashtami* and *Pratipad* instead of Sundays be abandoned because everywhere in other educational institutions and working places their friends and relations and even one's children used to get their weekly rest on Sundays—so that by having their weekly closure on Sundays, everybody could get his family reconciliation.

However, in this matter some old-fashioned teachers and students were reluctant to follow the new practice. For, they recalled the verse in Valmiki's *Ramayana* which described the emaciated state of lonely Sita separated from Rama like "the reduced effectiveness of studies on the Pratipad a day" and had firm belief in its veracity. For this reason it was easy to abandon the case for Sunday as weekly holiday. It is relevant to remember in this context that the controversy

about observing as weekly holiday on *Pratipad–Ashtami* or the Sundays is a live issue in many Sanskrit educational institutions of India even today. For example, in the Kameshwarsingh Sanskrit University itself the post-graduate department of Vyakarana is closed on *Pratipad-Ashtami* for its weekly closure where as the department of Sahitya and the university office close on Sundays. Mm. Mishra once told me in a private conversation that the Christians reserve only one sabbatical day for worship, after working for six days and the Sunday was declared as a weekly closure for this reason, whereas for the Brahmanical Hindus the scriptures have prescribed all the days in the week for worship. We do not study on *Pratipad* and *Ashtami* because those days are not fit for studying, and not because they are the days of rest ! Verily the Mahamahopadhyay never needed a rest day, he was all the time working, so he never felt the need of a holiday to rest after working for six days ! Let us see how long *Pratipad–Ashtami* closures continue to be observed in the world of Sanskrit !

Mm. Mishra used to be very respectful to pandits. Nevertheless many of those who were merely pandits in name felt shy in making their appearance before him. For, he had the habit of putting scholarly questions at random. However he never humiliated those who could not answer his query to his satisfaction, for he knew that no one could answer all questions, yet the pandits regarded such queries as against all canons of decency and used to take the greatest exception to his queries.

Once a pandit not only took exception to such a query but lost his temper and told him blatantly : "How would you, Sir, relish it if someone put a quesion to you like this ?" The pandit, however, was feeling a little diffident for daring to make such a comment and felt that some evil might befall him for such words. But he was surprised to see an innocent smile on the face of Mm. Mishra and he breathed a sigh of relief. Mm. Mishra replied, "If someone puts a question to me, I shall be as glad to make a reply as I am in asking a question. If you have any question to ask, please do not hesitate to do so. If I know the answer I shall tell you, and if I do not know it, I shall ask the answer from your goodself. You will have to

ask me some question today." The poor pandit looked quite perturbed, but when the Mahamahopadhyay insisted on his asking, he did ask him a few commonplace questions and on getting answers he was full of admiration. Actually if a student or teacher placed before him at random some problem in any scholarly discipline he used to extremely pleased. This illustrates his love of studies.

One day I visited the hostel of the Mithila Institute of Research in Sanskrit where my father Mahavaiyakarana Dinabandhu Jha and the great Naiyayika Shashinatha Jha resided. In the evening both scholars were engaged in conversation. Mm. Mishra reached there and sat on the same mat as they were seated. He asked my father straightaway : "Dinabandhu Babu ! Would you consider it right to abandon a custom if it is proved to be against the scriptures or against logic ?" The Mahavaiyakarana replied : "Why should it be wrong to do so ?" Having got the approval Mm. Mishra opened the main question : "While counting the *Pravara* (chief) seers under the Vatsa family of seers the texts mention five names— (1) Ourva, (2) Cyavana, (3) Bhargava, (4) Jamadadgnya, and (5) Aplavana. But I suspect that in enumerating the chief seers in other families of the seers the practice is to mention first the name of the family seer, such as, while enumerating the three chief seers in the family of Shandilya the name of the family seer Shandilya is first mentioned and then the other two, Asita, etc., then why is it that in enumerating the chief seers in the family of Vatsa the name of Vatsa is omitted ?" The great Naiyayika Shashinatha Jha gave his opinion, "Yes...your query is justified but it is difficult to answer it." The Mahavaiyakarana asked : "Do you think that the name of Vatsa be added among the names of chief seers in his family ? If that is done, then instead of the prescribed enumeration of *five* chief seers, there would be *six* chief seers in this family." Mm. Mishra acknowledged that such a situation would arise. It was not possible for the three pandits to solve this problem. Mm. Mishra, however, kept on making efforts to solve it and eventually found out an answer with the help of the relevant scriptures. The solution of this problem was as follows : The word Bhargava was not the name of any seer but just an epithet of Jamadagnya (meaning

descendant of Bhrigu seer). For, there were two seers known as Jamadagnya and, therefore, to distinguish this seer the epithet Bhargava (meaning descendant of Bhrigu) was appended to the name Jamadagnya. Obviously, therefore, the name Vatsa had to be added to the list of five chief seers in the family of Vatsa. In support of his solution the Mahamahopadyhyaya discovered a text in several palm-leaf manuscripts. On its confirmation he was struck with joy as well as wonder. Immediately he sent for the Mahavaiyakarana to the Library, and showed him the palm-leaf Mss where actually the name Vatsa was added in the beginning of the five *pravara rishis.* Mm. Mishra later wrote a paper on this topic and contended that some ignorant copyist pandit had felt that Bhargava was not an epithet but a name and had introduced the current reading of the text omitting the name of Vatsa, and later the epithet itself came to be known as a seer and the popular tradition came into vogue in the long run.

It may be noticed that though in general Mm. Mishra was a traditionalist, in such scholarly matters he was a rationalist—indeed, for adopting such a course he had already obtained the assent to the Mahavaiyakarana. Thus the Mahavaiyakarana had to become a supporter of Mm. Mishra's view. Of course, this did not put an end to his traditionalism in common matters of everyday life, but in the world of pandits, there was a wide appreciation of his powers of keen observation and acute sense of finding out the truth.

Mm. Mishra declared one more such customary tradition as opposed to the injunctions of the Scriptures. Among the Maithils it is a common practice to sprinkle leaves of grass (*durva*) with rice (*aksata*) on auspicious occasions on thehead of somebody with the celebrated Vedic chants o blessings *A Brahman Brahmeno Brahmavacasi Jayatam,* etc.

Now in the course of this Maithil ritual of bestowing blessings with grass *(durva)* while some Brahmana families used *araba* rice *(aksata),* others use paddy in the sense of *aksata.* Mm. Mishra resolved the twofold interpretation of this word in the blessing ritual by reference to the texts of the Scriptures. He found out that *aksata* actually meant paddy

and not rice. For, the word *aksata* literally meant something that is 'intact' or something 'not wounded' *(ksata)* in any way. But rice could not be regarded as *aksata*, because rice is the end of a paddy grain and is prepared after the husk is separated and the paddy grain is 'wounded' *(ksata)* while being pounded. Therefore, logically in every rite *aksata* should be paddy and never rice. However, the Pandits did not accept Mm. Mishra's logical interpretation. They held that all over India, in the temples as well as homes during worship or on auspicious occasions it is rice and never paddy that is normally used in the name of *aksata*. Hence the word *aksata* has remained to mean both 'rice' and 'paddy'—their use depending upon the custom and tradition in each case, and, therefore, there is no need to be punctitious in using paddy alone everywhere in all rites and rituals. Nevertheless Mm Mishra stuck to his guns, and even in the course of his daily prayers he used paddy as *aksata*. This was, however, the second case in which he went against a tradition that was not correctly adopted in the light of the text of the Scriptures.

One can see how firm Mm. Mishra was in his views, how punctilious he was in following the tone and tenor of the Scriptures. How persistently he maintained the traditional customs, how he could oppose a traditional practice should it be found opposed to the scriptural texts. How liberal and kind he could be when it is needed. How capable he was in controlling the students and the teachers under his charge. Presence of so many virtues in one person is quite rare. They were the steps which enabled him to reach the heights of greatness in his life.

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